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The

# BROAD CHURCHMAN



FAITH &  
ADORATION

A catechism  
of



LIGHT &  
CULTURE.

CHRISTIAN

PANTHEISM



LIFE &  
IMMORTALITY



LOVE &  
FRATERNITY.



ORDER &  
PROGRESS.



*With the Author's Compliments*





# THE BROAD CHURCHMAN



THE  
BROAD CHURCHMAN

A Catechism of Christian Pantheism



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“ We must reject from our creed every violation of nature, every contradiction of reason, every vindictive and inhuman sentiment ; retaining only those things which reason and experience declare to be true and of benefit to mankind.”

D. CAMPBELL,

*Gospel of World's Divine Order.*

“ Allen gehört was du denkst,  
Dein eigen ist nur was du fühllest.”

SCHILLER.

“ On peut admettre l'existence de Dieu, l'immortalité de l'âme, et la nécessité de la religion dans la vie individuelle et sociale, sans abdiquer la raison, et sans cesser d'être libre penseur.”

G. TIBERGHIEU,

*La Vie Morale.*

“ La foi naïve est morte, il faut la remplacer par une foi réfléchie.”

VICTOR COUSIN,

*Du Vrai, du Beau et du Bien.*

“ Noli quaerere quis haec scripserit, ne te auctoritas scribentis offendat ; sed amor puræ veritatis te ad legendum trahat.”—*Imitatio Christi.*

“ Haec non pro me loquor, ego enim in alto omnium vitiorum sum, sed pro illo, cui aliquid acti est.”

SENECA,

*De Vita Beata.*



## P R E F A C E.



THIS book had its origin in some notes which I drew up many years ago for the use of my own children. It is a great mistake to give young people no definite religious instruction, for one of two things must happen : either they will grow up to Materialism and Atheism, or they will embrace the first form of superstition that offers. The boys will probably believe nothing at all in after life, and the girls will fall under the control of the priest. This is, to a great extent, the case in France ; and it must sooner or later be the case wherever parents either neglect the religious instruction of their own children or delegate it to the priest.

It is useless to put vague generalities before boys and girls, or to perplex them with philosophical subtilities. They must have and hold something simple, definite, and systematic. We must speak thus to our children : " Believe these truths, and guide your life by them, until you find by careful searching something better." Why have the most irrational superstitions so firm a hold upon humanity ? Mainly because they are taught in a definite and systematic manner. Those who rise above these superstitions must be equally systematic and definite, aye, and dogmatic rather than indistinct. A lower religion should be for those who hold the higher, what it was to the ancient Persians, " a lie," with which no compromise is possible.

But before we can teach our children, we must ask ourselves,

“what do we believe, and what do we disbelieve?” For we can give no clear and definite ideas if our own religious opinions are indistinct and confused.

There are thousands of persons hanging about the skirts of Orthodoxy, fearing to be thought “heretics,” and making no firm stand anywhere. These people object above all things to be named and classed, but the great majority of them are believers in God—that is, Theists. Why do we hesitate to call ourselves by our proper name? The Evangelical is not ashamed of his “plan of redemption,” the Romanist is proud of his infallible Pope, even the Agnostic and the Atheist hoist their banners boldly. The Theist or Pantheist alone, with whom lie the future of religion and the hope of Idealism, is ashamed of his creed.

I have here put together some notes on those points where young people are most likely to be misled, and I have tried “nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen” to make clear not so much what I think myself on religious questions (this matters little), but what great and good men of the past and of the present time have said and taught. I have never used my own words where it was possible to quote from some well-known author. I have seldom cited writers (such as Huxley or Keble) whose general opinions I disapprove. But the Latin proverb says: “It is lawful to learn from a foe.” I attempt no learned arguments, nor subtle speculations. I keep clear of the ego and the non ego. I do not meddle with the mysteries of mind and matter; in fact, “I raise no philosophic reek,” as Burns would say; but, like Lucetta, “I show my mind according to my shallow, simple skill.” I offer only such thoughts as may occur to any educated person who tries to reconcile the teachings of the past with reason and common sense.

The Creeds, Catechisms, Services, etc., may be regarded as suggestions. They are intended to show what form the practical part of religion may be expected to take under the influence of



Monotheistic ideas. When the right time comes, they will be written by some more powerful pen.

As regards the title, I understand by a "Broad Churchman" a person who neither wholly accepts nor yet utterly rejects the teaching of the Churches; who clings to the Idealism which forms the highest element in Christianity, but repudiates the Materialism which defaces it. In a word, the Broad Churchman holds all that is vital in the popular religion, but puts the higher and truer construction on the doctrines of his day, just as Socrates claimed to be a believer in the Gods, though he differed on many points from his fellow-countrymen. The Broad Churchman may be described in the words of a well-known authoress (Mrs. H. Ward) as "a person who can neither accept fairy tales, nor reconcile himself to a life without faith."

With the more orthodox Broad Churchmen the compiler has little in common. If such writers as Maurice are quoted, it is in order to show that there are points of contact between rational religion and the more cultivated phases of Christianity.

On the other hand, we must respect and reverence Robertson as the most spiritual and enlightened of English clergymen, and the greatest preacher of his day. It is much to be regretted that he remained attached to the Anglican establishment. Robertson has a worthy successor in Stopford Brooke, whose books should be in the hands of all enlightened and progressive Christians.

Whereas the Secularist ignores, the Agnostic repudiates, and the Atheist despises religion, the Broad Churchman insists earnestly upon religion, but it must be rational religion.

Bacon defines a "heathen" as a man "who has no constant belief or confession, but leaves all to liberty of argument." "Superstition, on the other hand," says he, "interdicteth argument altogether." That is to say, the one despises all authority, and the other exalts the "tradition of the elders" at the expense of reason. "Between these two extremes," Bacon says, "faith holds

and preserves the golden mediocrity." This "golden mediocrity" of faith shifts in each age, and varies, and must be sought afresh ; for it is decreed that each new generation must answer for itself the momentous question—"where is God?" (Jer. i. 8).

Possibly these pages may be of service to some who have no leisure to engage in the search. In any case, "those who seek shall find," if not a complete and ready-made faith, yet light enough to guide them to happiness and peace.

Hail, then, to all fellow-searchers of the ancient and the modern Scriptures! "Allen Gleich-gesinnnten Gruss und Hand-schlag!"

REV. G. E. COMERFORD CASEY, M.A. Oxon.

*Villa L'Eden, St. Maurice, Nice.*

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# THE BROAD CHURCHMAN.



## 1.—THE GREAT AND GOOD.

WHO and what was Christ? (Mark xiv. 64). It has been truly said that a man's attitude to religious questions may be inferred from his answer to this vital question. Christ, then, was one of the great and good. He was a prophet and religious reformer, the record of whose life is embellished by miracle and marvel, and coloured with Oriental imagery. In other words, the Christ of the Gospels is to some extent mythical. But through the clouds of myth and mystery, we can detect the features of a hero, a great and good man who devotes himself for his fellows, one of the "good shepherds who give their lives for the sheep" (John x. 11).

The characteristics of the true hero are two: he must have great powers (Mark i. 7, and Psalm lxxxix. 19), and he must use these powers to benefit mankind:

"Non sibi sed toti genitum se credere mundo."—*Lucan* ii. 380.

The hero must not live at ease. Niebuhr says of Heracles, "His father did not wish him to live at ease, without using the great powers which he had given him, but his life in this world must be hard" (*Heroen-geschichten*). Such men are few; in many generations one perhaps arises: but they do appear, like the sacred apis, from time to time, for "God does not leave himself without a witness" (Acts xiv. 17).

Some men are great, many are good, few are both great and good; but these few are they who make epochs in the history of the world.

"Count me those only who are good and great."—*Pope*.

"Men in history," says Emerson, "men in the world of to-day, are insects, as it were : in a century, in a millennium, one or two men appear, that is to say, one or two approximations to the right state of every man."

A true Epiphany takes place, that is a "manifestation" of the godlike to man, whenever the star of divine inspiration presides over the birth of some teacher destined to lead men to a higher ideal. Thus the heavenly light flashed over the lowly manger of Christ (Matt. ii. 19), as the flame of genius flickered on the brow of the low-born Servius Tullius.

Among the mythical or semi-mythical heroes of antiquity are Heracles, Achilles, Odysseus, Theseus, Perseus, Abraham, Moses, David, Mithra, Buddha, Christ, Tell. See the introduction to the beautifully written "Tales of Greece," by Cox.

In each of these early myths, including that of Christ, there are three elements.

First, the original ground-work of history, sometimes almost obliterated, as in the case of Heracles and Tell, sometimes dimly discernible, as in the Gospel story of Christ.

Secondly, a mass of miracles and marvels, which are attributed to the hero, and which are generally more or less tinged with solar symbolism.

Thirdly, a lesson in religion.

In estimating each of these three elements we go astray. We ignore the religious teaching in the lives of all those heroes whom we are pleased to call "Pagan." We treat the supernatural element in the life of Christ as if it were historical. And lastly, we deny the historical element in all ancient hero legends, excepting those of Palestine. This is pushing Euhemerism too far. It is not possible for persons trained up in these three cardinal errors to have any reasonable ideas on religion, mythology, and history.

As regards the religious question, we shall take it for granted that lessons of devotion and unselfishness (what else do we mean by religion ?) are to be learned from the lives of all great and good men, of whatever race and age. Ultra scepticism in history is thus

rebuked by a writer who is himself a sceptic and an atheist, and who can therefore not be accused of credulity. "Il est difficile d'admettre que les faits éclatants des anciens héros qui ont préparé tant de récits merveilleux à la poésie, et tant d'incertitudes à l'histoire ne soient que de purs symboles, des fictions sacrées, des allégories astronomiques" (L. Combes, "La Grèce Ancienne").

As to the ultra credulity of those who take the Christian legends for history, we must leave them to settle their accounts with common sense as best they may. To us it is obvious that the Gospel miracles are the ornaments added by the Eastern imagination to the life of an heroic character.

Christ was the last of the semi-mythical heroes and prophets. Though later in date than Socrates, he belongs to an earlier stage of thought and feeling, for the Athenian sage stands, as it were, on the threshold of the modern world. On the other hand, the mysterious figure of Jesus looms—

"In the twilight of age [when] all things seem strange and phantasmal—  
As between daylight and dark, ghost-like the landscape appears."

Many of the ancient heroes were deified, that is, called demigods or even gods (1 Cor. viii. 5), and many men who were neither great nor good were called gods. We still use the term "Lord" in the same way. But neither Christ, the "son of man," as he calls himself (John v. 27 and vi. 27), nor any other man, however great and good, must be confounded with God who is the Spirit of the Universe.

The term "solar hero" or "sun-god" is often applied to Hercules and to other ancient heroes, because their bright and glorious life was compared with the course of the sun, which is to us the symbol of light and truth as opposed to darkness and error. For when such a man appears it is as if a "sun of righteousness" (Mal. iv. 2) had arisen on the earth. Thomson well expresses the feelings which led the early races of men to regard the sun as a symbol of light and truth, and an image of the Deity—



“ Prime cheerer light,  
Of all material beings first and best,  
Efflux divine, nature’s resplendent robe,  
Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapped  
In unessential gloom ! And thou, O Sun !  
Soul of surrounding worlds, in whom best seen  
Shines out thy maker.”

The picturesque custom of repeating the Creed with the face turned toward the East is a relic of the ancient sun-worship. There are other traces in Christianity : for instance, churches, chapels, and cathedrals are built with a longer axis East and West.

Similarly in the barrows and burial-places of prehistoric races we find that the bodies were placed with their faces towards the East.

Bishop Heber’s hymn, though excluded from most of our fashionable hymnals, is very appropriate to the Epiphany. (In the second verse an alteration is made)—

“ Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,  
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid :  
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,  
Guide where the infant Redeemer is laid.

“ Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are shining,  
Low lies His bed with the beasts of the stall ;  
Angels surround Him in slumber reclining,  
Saviour, Redeemer, and brother of all.

“ Say, shall we bring Him in costly devotion  
Odours of Edom and offerings divine,  
Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the ocean,  
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine ?

“ Vainly we offer each ample oblation,  
Vainly with gifts would his favour secure,  
Richer by far is the heart’s adoration,  
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.”



## 2.—SOLAR HEROES.

IN many points the solar heroes agree: for instance, as the sun goes through twelve months in the year, so Buddha and Christ have twelve disciples, Heracles twelve labours, Jacob the twelve patriarchs, Romulus the twelve ancilla, and so forth. These are the twelve signs of the Zodiac.

Again the storm ceases when the sun shines forth, so Oceanus obeys the commands of Heracles, and in like manner Christ rebukes the wind, and says to the waves, "peace, be still!" (Mark iv. 39). In infancy the solar hero is frequently threatened by the powers of darkness. Thus Herod "massacres the innocents" in an attempt to destroy the child Jesus (Matt. ii. 16); and two snakes, symbols of evil, attempt to strangle the infant Heracles as he lies in his foster-father's shield.

Apollo and Zeus himself were similarly exposed to danger in their infancy. Romulus and Moses were cast into the water. Semiramis and Bacchus may be mentioned among other instances. Again the solar hero generally comes, like the sun, from the East, "rejoicing like a giant to run his course." Thus the star or constellation announcing the birth of Christ appears in the East.

Heracles travels Westward to the ocean-shore in search of the red-coloured oxen of King Geryon, the golden clouds of the sunset. So also Odysseus wanders with the sun—from Troy to his home in the rocky Ithaca. It is remarkable that the migrations of men appear to follow the same law. The great Aryan race probably moved Westward from Central Asia into Europe, and we know that the tide of emigration and conquest has flowed Westward across the Atlantic, and is still tending Westward across the great continent of America—

"Westward the course of empire takes its way."—*Berkley.*

We have given here only a few instances where Christ is represented as a solar hero; those who read the Gospels attentively will find many others. Thus the swine, symbols of impurity, shrink from the presence of the bright and Holy One, and rush down a steep place (Matt. viii. 32), just as the boar of Erymanthus ran from Heracles and fell into a chasm.

The following passage from G. Massey ("Natural Genesis") illustrates the close connection between mythology and astronomy: "On Christmas-day, when the Christ, the Buddha, or Mithra was born, the birthday of the sun in the winter solstice, the constellation of the Virgin arose upon the horizon. She was represented as holding the new-born child in her arms, and being pursued by the serpent, which opened its mouth just beneath her in the position of being trodden under foot. This symbolism was applied to Isis and Horus in Egypt, to Maya and Buddha in India and China, to the woman and child in the book of Revelation (Rev. xii.), to Mary and Jesus in Rome." This heavenly virgin, called the mother of the sun-god, because she presided over his birth, is the "sainte vierge" or the "heilige Jungfrau" of the Romanists, and she is correctly represented in most South European churches with a background of stars, or else with a pattern of stars on her robe.

In like manner the "lamb of God" (Rev. v. 6; John i. 29) is connected with the sign Aries, and so on.

The question of solar symbolism in ancient religions was first explained by the French philosopher, Dupuis, in his "*Origine des Cultes*." He traces the astronomical element in Christianity, compares it with that of other Eastern religious systems, and shows that, as far as mythology is concerned, Christianity is in no sense isolated, but forms a branch of the primitive and universal nature-worship. It is to be regretted that this learned and brilliant writer denies the historical element in all the solar myths, including Christianity, and that his reasoning on religious questions is entirely destructive.

### 3.—MITHRA, BUDDHA, AND JESUS.

OF all the great heroes, prophets, saviours, messiahs, and avatars, Buddha and Christ correspond most closely. The agreement between the story of Christ and the earlier one of Buddha is indeed so close that we must consider the Christian legend to be a repetition of the older myth.

Both were born about December 25th, as was also Mithra. Christ, like Buddha, was long foretold and expected. Each was supposed to have been born of a virgin by the Spirit of God (parthenogenesis).

Mary, like Maia the mother of Buddha, was confined at an inn while travelling (Luke ii. 7). Angels sing, as in the Gospel (Luke ii. 13 and 14), "This day Buddha is born on earth, to give joy and peace to men."

Kings adore the child Buddha; and in the Gospel also (Matt. ii. 1) the three kings bring offerings. Celestial signs accompany the birth of Christ (Matt. ii. 2) as of Buddha.

At the age of twelve, Christ, like the young Buddha, was presented at the Temple, and astonished the learned with his questions (Luke ii. 48).

When about twenty years of age both Buddha and Christ went out into the wilderness and were tempted by the evil spirit; after this they began to teach. Both Buddha and Christ are baptised, entering a river, attended by holy spirits (Luke iii. 21). The teaching of the two solar heroes is similar, indeed in many respects identical, and the parables of Christ (Matt. xiii. 3) closely resemble those of Buddha.

Only in the manner of his death, which was tranquil and quiet, does the story of Buddha differ from that of Christ. (Taken from a review.)

On these and similar coincidences Dupuis remarks: "Il est aisé

d'apercevoir que, quand deux religions se ressemblent aussi parfaitement, la plus ancienne est la mère, la plus jeune la fille."

Again, the story of Christ corresponds so closely with the earlier legend of Mithra, that early Christian apologists were driven to invoke the help of Satan in order to explain the agreement. The devil foresaw the life of Christ, and compelled the Persian hero to anticipate it !

The truth is, that the legend of a toiling or a suffering hero was common to all Eastern races. And this sacred story reached its highest and most beautiful development, as might be expected, among the thoughtful Hindoos and among the spiritual and imaginative Hebrews.

#### 4.—LIFE AND WORK.

THE story of Buddha, of Christ, or of Heracles is at once a summary of the history of humanity and a type of the life of man.

At first the hero hesitates to undertake his arduous mission: the "natural man" shrinks from the contest with evil, and wishes for a moment that the cup of suffering may pass (Matt. xxvi. 39, and John xii. 27). "L'homme qui a sacrifié à une grande idée son repos et les récompenses légitimes de la vie éprouve toujours un moment de retour triste quand l'image de la mort se présente à lui pour la première fois, et cherche à lui persuader que tout est vain" (Renan, Jésus). This is why Achilles hides in woman's clothing when the war breaks out, Jonah flees on board ship, Moses is unwilling to appear before Pharaoh. But once embarked on his course, the hero never turns aside, for he knows that he "must be about his Father's business" (Luke ii. 49).

The hero is, as a rule, short-lived, "whom the gods love die young." Thus Achilles was doomed to an early death; he was *ōkumorōtatos allōn*, and Christ was crucified at the age of thirty. Both knew that a short life may be more glorious than a long one "ad bene vivendum breve tempus satis est."

Nor does he see good days, for he is constantly at variance with the temporal and spiritual powers. Achilles was wronged by Agamemnon, David by Saul, Heracles by Aigistheus, etc. Both priests and rulers combined against Christ, as they ever must against all who in any degree resemble him (Amos v. 10): he is destined to be "despised and rejected by men" (Matt. xxvi. 3, and Isaiah liii. 3).

"Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land,  
All fear, none aid you, and few understand."—*Pope*.

Both Christ and Socrates were "heretics," that is, men who ventured to think for themselves, and both were put to death for heresy.

Christ had spoken against the "temple" (Mark. xiv. 58), that is, against the orthodoxy of his day : Socrates had taught newer and higher ideas, which his enemies called "corrupting the youth."

Both Socrates and Christ were idealists, and their idealism clashed with the materialism of the masses. Christ's heresy was not an opposition to religion, but to the sacerdotalism of the clergy, the formalism of the wealthy, the superstitions of the ignorant. His was the heresy of those who have more faith than the multitude, not of those that have less. He came "not to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17), not to deny, but to affirm, not only to pull down, but also to build up. His method was not one of negations, not "*haec in philosophia ratio contra omnia disserendi, nullamque rem aperte judicandi*" of which Cicero justly complains. Christ strove, in fact, to help and to raise men in the only way in which it is possible to help and to raise them—*viz.*, by reforming the religion which rules our daily life.



## 5.—BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

THE solar hero, though often born among the *plebs*, must be of high descent: a truly noble man comes not of mean or slavish ancestors—

“Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis.”

Some races and some families are more capable of noble deeds, and less selfish than the rest. Therefore the pedigree of Christ is traced to David the king on earth (Matt. i. 1), and to God the king of heaven (Luke iii. 23). We cannot, of course, take these genealogies seriously, but we must not make the great mistake of neglecting the lesson which they teach: that nobility of character is hereditary no less than vice and depravity. When a noble race or family dies out or degenerates, humanity is a loser.

The father of an ancient hero is frequently supposed to be a god, and the mother bears this godlike son before her marriage with a mortal.

Christ was by no means the only example of this parthenogenesis: Heracles, Romulus, and most of the great heroes were “sons of God.” Conversely, a particularly bad man was said to be a “son of Belial” (Deut. xiii. 13), and Plutarch has a legend of a man who was actually begotten by a demon.

“We must have kings, and we must have nobles; Nature is always providing such in every society. Only let us have the real instead of the titular; let us have our leading and our inspiration from the best” (Emerson, “Nature”).

## 6.—YOUTH AND TEMPTATION.

IN youth the hero is tempted, but resists. Thus Christ is offered the “kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them” (Matt. iv. 1), and Heracles is met in early life, at the parting of the ways, the “bivium Pythagorae,” by Aphrodite, enticing to the flowery path, and Athene, pointing to the rocky one. Read the famous Parable of Prodicus, told by Socrates in “Xenophon Mem” ii. 1.

“ Aus dem Leben heraus sind der Wege zwei dir geöffnet :  
 Zum Ideale führt einer, der andre zum Tod.  
 Siehe dass du bei Zeit noch frei auf den ersten entspringest,  
 Ehe die Parze mit Zwang dich auf den andern entführt.”—*Schiller*.

Here are two lame translations for those who do not know German :

Two paths lie open as you start in life ;  
 This leads to an ideal, that to death :  
 Haste to set out upon the former one,  
 Ere fate compel you to the second road.

Onward from life two paths lie open to every mortal ;  
 Towards an ideal the one leads. but the other to death :  
 Hasten the former to choose, and start full soon on your journey,  
 Ere the decree of fate force you the latter to take.



## 7.—MANHOOD AND POWER.

As the youth of the hero is well-spent, so his manhood is great and glorious (John i. 14 ; Luke ix. 32).

He is "girded with strength" like the son of Jesse (Psalm xviii. 39), and radiant like Apollo.

He has the *might* of Dionusos, lord of wine (John ii.); the *majesty* of Moses, a *dominion* greater than that of earthly emperor, for he sways the minds of men, and the *power* of those who wrestle with God and prevail (Gen. xxxii. 24), who strive towards an ideal and attain it.

He rises, like Lucifer, to lighten the darkness of the world (John xii. 46).

He comes from the East, from Edom, from the borders of the desert of life ; he travels in the greatness of his strength ; he treads alone the wine-press of suffering, and of the people there is none with him (Isaiah lxiii. 3).

He dwells in the light of pure reason, to which mortals can hardly approach (1. Tim. vi. 16).

He is a *prophet*, mighty in word and deed before God and man (Luke xxiv. 19) ; a *priest* "after the order of Melchizedek," that is, "not made so after the law of a carnal commandment," nor by the laying-on of human hands (Heb. vii. 16) ; a *king*, on whose head are many crowns (Rev. xix. 12), for he rules himself, "rex eris si recte facies" (Hor. 1, Epist. 1), and he has overcome the love of life and the fear of death.

Therefore he is called, in Hebrew, "Messiah," and in Greek, "Christos," the "anointed" one.

Such is the perfect man, such is the ideal of humanity.

This ideal man exists but in our thoughts, he never walked this earth, and never will. If Christ be supposed to approach nearer to the ideal than Socrates or Marcus Aurelius, the reason

is obvious. Christ is not an historic character. The imagination has had free play. The events of his life are half-hidden in bright clouds of fancy. A shining mantle is thrown round the hero, which raises him above the rank of mortals. Some people wish to reach the facts which underlie this fiction of the mind. Leave this to theologians !

The ideal is more important than the facts on which it rests, as the statue than its pedestal. Woe to the man who thrusts out the ideal from his life, and thinks to establish his faith by the sifting of historical evidence !

## 8.—DEATH.

“Mors janua vitae.” “Nihil interit.”

As his youth is pure, his manhood powerful, so his end is peace (Psalm xxxvii. 37). His death is like a bright and glorious sunset. Thus Christ is transfigured, and rises to heaven, and clouds receive him from the sight of man (Acts i. 9). Heracles, in like manner, “becomes resplendent, and ascends on flames to the sky” (Class. Dic.).

Elijah mounts his chariot of fire.

Odysseus is transformed when he reaches his home in the West; the suitors are dead, the ground is crimson with their blood; evil is vanquished, and the strife is at an end, “death is swallowed up in victory.”

Thus may we live that we may die the death of the righteous, and that our end may be, like his, peaceful and triumphant! (Numb. xxiii. 10).

“Death is the veil which those who live call life,  
They sleep, and it is lifted.”—*Shelley Prom.*

“Nothing is dead, nay nothing sleeps; each soul  
That ever animated human clay  
Now wakes, is on the wing.”—*Young.*

The year is divided by the Equinoxes into two periods of six months: the summer of life and light, and health and goodness; the winter of darkness and disease, and evil and death. The gloomy season of the year is presided over by the serpent, the “prince of darkness,” evil, and decay. His reign commences at the autumn Equinox, that is at Michaelmas, September 23rd. It was natural, inevitable, that this date should be fixed as the time when we think of the departed. The decay of Nature, the

falling leaf, the shortening day, all things remind us of times that cannot come again, of friends no longer with us.

As the great cycle of the year rolls by, each season brings its lesson of sadness or of joy. Christmas answers to Midsummer, and Easter to Michaelmas. Christmas is the season of hope, Midsummer of gratitude: Easter is a time of triumph, Michaelmas of sadness.

We cannot hope to improve upon this ancient and universal calendar, which Nature herself has dictated to mankind. For Nature is but another name for God, and what He does cannot be mended by man. But we may, and we ought to, bring these primitive customs back to their original intention when they lose their meaning by the lapse of time.

At the solemn festival of "All Saints Day" or "*le jour des morts*," which falls at Michaelmas, we deck the tombs of our departed relatives and friends, and tell our children the story of their ancestors. We who believe in a future life do not sorrow "as those who have no hope" (1 Thess. iv. 13), but we do and must lament. "The sorrow for the dead is the only sorrow from which we refuse to be divorced" (Irving, "*Sketch Book*").

## 9.—RESURRECTION : EASTER : IMMORTALITY.

THE future life is not a dogma, but a hope, and nowhere is this hope so well expressed as in Schiller's beautiful poem, "*Hoffnung*," which is given at the end of this chapter. Young ("*Night Thoughts*," vii.) argues well that—

" Man's immortality alone can solve  
The darkest of enigmas, human hope ;  
Of all the darkest, if at death we die."

And what other solution can be found for that mysterious problem which forms the subject-matter of the book of Job? In what other way can the sufferings of a righteous man, and the prosperity of the mean and selfish be reconciled with justice?

If there be no immortality, there is no justice: if no justice, then no Deity and no hope, for a Deity must be just. Idealism is then a lost cause, and pessimism the only possible philosophy. Infanticide is no longer a crime, but a kindness, and suicide the natural refuge of all those whose courage does not fail them.

As Christ "rose again from death, and sits on the right hand of God," so Heracles is received on Olympus. Romulus, and many other heroes are thus translated. It is childish and futile to inquire into the truth of these tales; they are a beautiful allegory (Gal. iv. 24), and their meaning is that immortality is the reward, or rather the result, of idealism. That is to say, death has no power over the good and true (1 John xiii. 14). The real death is the death of the soul; from this the righteous are exempt, being, as it were, "born a second time" (John iii. 3; Peter i. 23); for them "death has no sting, and the grave no terror" (1 Cor. xv. 55). "The things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18), that is to say, the abstract and the ideal alter not, fade not, and pass not away.

Those, therefore, who hold fast to idealism "pass from death unto life" (1 John xiii. 14), for they are anchored to that which is alone unchangeable and eternal.

They alone are partakers of "salvation," are saved, that is, from the "damnation" or destruction which awaits all that is false and worthless.

They alone are "atoned," that is, "at one" with the Spirit of the Universe, with God, and are sustained by the infinite forces of Nature.

The great and gifted Keltic race has always held the doctrine of a future state. The Druids taught, "*regit idem spiritus artus orbe alio, longae vitae mors media est*" (Lucan i. 450). And the hope was common to most of the higher races of mankind. "The worship of Osiris, ransomed from the dead, impressed this divine doctrine on the old Egyptian mind, and the yearly Easter of alternate grief and joy for the death and resurrection of Adonis, may have served the same high purpose for the Sidonians" (D. Campbell, "Gospel of the World's Divine Order," a book full of true and beautiful thoughts). Even among savages the same ideas prevailed, for "there is among the North American tribes a ruling agreement concerning a future state of existence." The feeling, in fact, is universal. Who has not said with the poet Young :

" An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave ;  
Legions of angels can't confine me there."

Shall we reject a hope which is the common heritage of humanity, and which is strongest in those who live in closest communion with Nature? "Thinkest thou it were impossible, unimaginable," says Carlyle, "glance into the eternal, believe what thou findest written in the sanctuaries of man's soul."

It is true that the sacred writings of the Israelites (that is the Old Testament), contain no distinct assurance on which a Jew might ground his hope of a future life, but "the sweet and simple words of Hebrew piety are in perfect harmony with that hope" (D. Campbell).

If the idealist have no hope beyond this life, he is "of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. xv. 19), for his idealism makes him a prey to his neighbours (Isaiah lix. 15), whereas the materialist has prosperity as his reward (Matt. vi. 2). "It is impossible," says Addison, on Cheerfulness, "for anyone to enjoy his present existence who is apprehensive of annihilation;" and again in his well-known lines :

"It must be so : Plato, thou reasonest well ;  
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
This longing after immortality ?  
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror  
Of falling into nought ? Why shrinks the soul  
Back on itself, and startles at destruction ?  
'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us ;  
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,  
And intimates eternity to man."

Well may Paul ask (1 Cor. xv. 32) to what end do the sufferings and the discipline of this life tend, and why should we endure them, if death be to us the end of all things. We should indeed be driven to say with Sardanapalus, "eat, drink, and enjoy yourself: all else is vanity," or, with the gross materialist, Solomon, "be not righteous overmuch, why shouldst thou destroy thyself?" (Eccl. vii. 16).

"If this be all, if earth a final scene,  
Take heed, stand fast, be sure to be a knave,  
A knave in grain, ne'er deviate into right !  
Should'st thou be good, how infinite the loss ;  
Guilt only makes annihilation gain."—*Young*.

"After all, what is at the root of this belief in annihilation? It is that our theology has been for some years presenting to us an idea of God wholly inadequate to our present intellectual and moral conceptions, and an idea of man which we now reject as ignoble, and as untrue, because ignoble. An adequate idea of God, a noble idea of man : these are the ideas which, reintroduced into theology,



will bring back the belief in immortality" (Stopford Brooke, "Christ in modern Life").

Easter is the festival or feast of the Resurrection. This occurs in springtime, when the trees are bursting into leaf, and vegetation is reviving, "when the flowers appear on the earth, and the time of singing is come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in the land" (Sol. Song, ii. 12). For the renewal of Nature after her winter sleep is symbolic of the new life which we hope for after the sleep of death.

The vernal Equinox was called in the East the "transit" or the "time of passing," when the six sad months were past, and the six glad ones began.

At Easter, that is at this same period of the year, the Hebrews "passed" from the dark slavery of Egypt to the light of liberty. This was the historical fact commemorated at their "passover."

But on March 20th, that is at the Equinox or Easter, as anyone may see by looking at the Zodiac, the sun enters the sign of the sheep, ram, or lamb. Hence, the "paschal lamb" of the Hebrews.

And Christ, being a solar hero, is called the "lamb," because the sun in this constellation triumphs over the powers of darkness and winter, and brings in the joyful season of summer.

As we celebrate at Christmas, the birth of the solar hero, so Easter marks his victory over darkness, and evil, and death.

It is impossible for me here to give even a small part of the evidence, but everyone who takes the trouble to look into the question will see that the festival of Easter, like all else that pertains to Christianity, is common to the different religions of the East, and by no means special to any one of them. These institutions are to be regarded as divine, not for the absurd reasons usually given, but because they are founded on Nature, which is divine. For when we say that something is divine, what else do we mean than this, that it is founded on Nature, and therefore agreeable to the laws of God.

To make this important point more clear, I give a short passage from "The Pentateuch," one of the valuable books published by Thomas Scott :—



“The festival called ‘Pesach’ by the Jews is a much older institution than the notice of it which we have in the book Exodus. Its Hebrew name is exactly rendered by the English word ‘transit,’ and the transit celebrated was primarily that of the sun over the equator at the epoch of the vernal Equinox : a season of rejoicing that may be said to be universal among all the policed peoples of antiquity, and which is still observed with fresh accessories and under a new name in the world of to-day.

“For the Easter of the present age is in reality no other than the Pascha, Neomenia, and Hilaria of the old world, a tribute Deo Soli Invicto.

“Mounting from the inferior or wintry signs, triumphant as it were over darkness and death, the sun then appears to bring back light and life to the world.

“And to the God he symbolised, men offered in gratitude in the spring of the year the first-fruits of the fields and the firstlings of the flocks and herds.”

Symbols of the resurrection are the butterfly (imago), the phœnix, the lotus flower, and others. Why was the nelumbium of the Nile chosen as an emblem of immortality? Perhaps not merely on account of its beauty. The allied water-lilies (nymphaea) of our own country depress their fruits below the surface of the water, and raise them again when ripe. Possibly this may be the explanation, especially as water was to many ancient races one of the symbols of death.

The history of the doctrine of immortality is sketched by Theodore Parker in his “Discourse,” chap. vi.

Schiller’s “Hope,” from a book of translations by G. P. Swayne :

“Of brighter and happier future days  
Humanity dreams and prattles,  
To gain some prize of golden blaze,  
See how it races and battles !  
The world grows aged and young again,  
Yet hope of better things cleaves to man.

“’Tis hope that unbars the door of life,  
Over childhood’s head she hovers ;  
The youth’s wild heart with her magic is rife,  
In his grave the grey father she covers.  
For he wearily closes his course in the grave,  
Yet bids on it hope still greenly wave.

“ Ah, 'tis not the brainless fool's vain song,  
A phantasy fond and fleeting ;  
In our hearts the echo is loud and long,—  
‘ We are born for a better being.’  
And the thing that clings to the heart so fast  
Will not cheat the soul, so she hopes to the last.”

## 10.—SALVATION AND REDEMPTION.

IN what way does a hero save mankind? He saves society by breaking down the falsehoods which destroy society; he saves the individual by setting before him an ideal. But it is God alone who saves: "beside the Deity there is no saviour" (Isaiah xliii. 11).

The greatest of Hebrew prophets protests with startling earnestness against the idolatrous worship of a mortal, and the blasphemy of looking to any but God for salvation and redemption.

Again and again he reiterates his solemn warning: "I the Lord am thy Saviour and Redeemer, beside me there is no God, no Saviour, no Redeemer, yea, I know not any. I will not give my glory to another."

From the 50th chapter onward, page after page, verse after verse, he continues in the same strain.

Yet in the very teeth of these texts Christianity has deserted the grand Hebrew monotheism, and has set up a human god, an earthly saviour and redeemer. Truly God has permitted "a strong delusion" (2 Thess. ii. 11) to fall upon mankind!

Christ is said to "redeem" or "buy back" the world, because by his example he raises men from a lower to a higher life. Sin is a kind of slavery from which we require to be, as it were, "ransomed" or "redeemed." "Redemption is taking men out of the life of falsehood into the life of truth and fact" (Robertson, "Baptism").

In this sense, every man is, in his degree, a saviour and redeemer who resists an abuse, who protests against an error, or who sets an example of devotion. Hence the saying, "omnes homines Christos."

We have each and all of us need of "salvation." The man

who does not feel this has no knowledge of religion, and nothing spiritual in his nature. As the Greeks at Cunaxa, when facing fearful odds, invoked "Zeus the Saviour," the highest power they knew of, so ought we to raise our "Hosanna" or "save Lord" to no human lord or master, but to the great God who is Overlord of all.

## 11.—HERO WORSHIP.

SHALL we worship the heroes of antiquity? "See thou do it not, for they are thy fellow-servants" (Rev. xix., 10), but rather strive to follow their example.

Not those who call Christ or Buddha "Lord" shall enter into the "kingdom of heaven," but those who obey God's laws (Matt. vii. 21).

In this eloquent passage of his "*Vie de Jésus*," Renan explains the sentiment which led to the apotheosis or deification of Christ. "Rest now in thy glory, noble reformer. Thy work is completed, the right is earned to rank with the divinest of humanity. Henceforth, removed above all mortal weakness, dwelling in the peace of heaven, thou wilt witness the far-reaching consequences of thy noble deeds.

"Thou hast purchased a glorious immortality at the cost of a short spell of suffering, which had no power to turn thy great soul from its lofty purpose. Generations to come will own thy name, and date their years from thy nativity.

"Mighty champion, bearing high the banner of truth, thou shalt be claimed as leader by each warring sect. More loving and more loved a thousand times than thou wast in thy earthly pilgrimage, thou art destined to become the corner-stone of the temple of humanity. To dishonour thy name would shake the foundations of society. Posterity in its blind devotion will confound thee with the Deity. Since thou hast triumphed over the fear of death, take possession of the heavenly kingdom, whither generations of admiring mortals shall follow thee, toiling along the path which thou hast traced."

Again, in his last chapter, the same writer sums up in a masterly manner the character of Christ as he is depicted in the Gospels.

"The great mass of humanity is sunk in sloth and egotism. Yet in this dead level there are pillars rising to the sky, and pointing mankind to a higher destiny.

"On one of these loftiest columns the name of Jesus is inscribed. In him are summed up many of our best and noblest qualities. He was not sinless, but he overcame those same passions which we fight against, and which we too may overcome.

"The angel from heaven which comforted him was none other than his approving conscience: the fiends which tempted him are those passions which haunt the heart of every mortal.

"It is probable that many of his highest thoughts are lost to us by reason of the limited intelligence of his disciples, and it is not unlikely that their devoted affection led them to conceal many of his faults. Yet, making every allowance for our imperfect and partial records of his career, we are constrained to admit that few men ever to such an extent subordinated their private interests and inclinations to the welfare of humanity. So complete was his devotion to his lofty ideal, that towards the end of life all earthly advantages had become indifferent to him. By this heroic effort of the will he raised his soul from earth to heaven. Neither the ties of family affection, nor the pleasures of life, nor any worldly care, had power to drag him down. He lived but to obey his heavenly Father, and to fulfil the sacred mission which devolved upon him." (The French is freely altered in this translation.)

"Hero worship (that is, reverence for noble characters) is a primal universal instinct of the heart. If we find a man nobler and wiser than ourselves, it is almost our instinct to prostrate our affections before that man" (Robertson).

The lower races of man, who are naturally incapable of abstract ideas, and men of degraded lives, who shrink from all serious thought, hesitate to address themselves directly to the Deity (Exod. xx., 19). Some great saint or hero is deified, and placed as mediator between God and man. Thus the ancient Chaldæan prayed to Meridug, who interceded for him with his father Ea. As Meridug was called in the poetic language of the East the "only son" of Ea, so Jesus became, many generations later, the

“only son” of Javeh, and intercedes in like manner for the devout Christian.

This is the first step towards polytheism, and is a sign of approaching decadence and corruption. But the downward process does not stop here. The “only son,” the mediator and intercessor, is soon himself too holy to be approached, and before long another subordinate god is set up to intercede with him. Thus the Romanist and the ritualist pray to Mary, and beg of her to prevail upon her divine son to present our supplications before the distant and more distant mercy-seat of heaven.

Next a saint intercedes with the virgin, and last of all the priest steps in between man and God.

Thus the lowest stage is reached. God has become “a God afar off” (Jer. xxiii. 23).

Listen to the wise counsel of Lammenais: “*défiiez vous des hommes qui se mettent entre Dieu et vous.*”

Herein lies the danger of an exaggerated hero worship: that it lapses into idolatry, and paves the way for that superstition which “exalts the priest into the place of God, and so commits treason against the majesty of heaven” (Maurice).

When men would place a mediator between us and the Deity, let us answer in the words of M. Loyson (Père Hyacinthe), “*Dieu seul suffit !*”



## 12.—CULTURE AND SCIENCE.

THE "imitation of Christ" and of other heroic characters embraces but one half of religion. The other part consists in culture. Our powers of mind and body must be trained, particularly the imagination and the reasoning faculty, because thus alone shall we escape superstition and bigotry. Wide and liberal culture is the only antidote to superstition. "Culture inverts the vulgar views of Nature, and brings the mind to call that apparent which it used to call real, and that real which it used to call visionary." In a word, "all true culture tends to imbue us with idealism" (Emerson).

We must not understand by culture the laborious learning of languages, mathematics, and sciences. All this may be done, yet culture not commenced. One quarter of the time now devoted to a false ideal of education would be more than sufficient to attain the highest culture that the mind admits.

Culture must include some knowledge of natural science, for as Antaeus was strong only while he touched the earth, so man can prosper only so long as he is in direct contact with Nature.

"Without some gleams of science man's soul is a blank, his morality incongruous, his religion idolatry, his prayers not the utterance of a free man of the city of God, but the slavish repetition of certain formulæ—his hope of futurity has no better foundation than the fanaticism and the fraud of priests" (D. Campbell).

"Fiducia boni non sine scientia sit."—*Seneca*.

"If we love and trust and reverence fact and Nature, which are the will of Almighty God Himself, then we shall be really loving and reverencing and trusting God" (Ch. Kingsley); for—

"The course of Nature is the art of God."—*Young*.



“Nature,” says Wordsworth “never did betray the heart that loved her”; and again, “To the solid ground of Nature trusts the mind that builds for aye.” So Florian—

“J’observe et je suis la Nature,  
m C’est non secret pour être heureux.”

Science therefore is an essential part of culture, and culture is essential to religion. The hostility of Christianity, and especially of Romanism, to culture and enlightenment, is the main cause why so many people in England and abroad are attempting to live without religion.

The symbol of culture is a lamp.

## 13.—MIRACLES AND MARVELS.

*Miracula stultis!* All wise and good men in ancient times were thought able to work wonders. Romanists suppose, even in this nineteenth century, that the bones of holy men, "relics of the saints," as they call them, have a marvellous power.

But we know by experience that no magic or miracle ever takes place in the presence of educated and enlightened people. When the newly-married invalid in Don Quixote begins to caper about, the bystanders, "more simple than curious," cry out, "A miracle! a miracle!" but those who were in the secret said, "No miracle, but sheer industry!" There is a good deal of "industry" about our modern miracles, and, as regards the ancient ones, there is no doubt that the people who testified to them were "more simple than curious."

The Jews were, at the time of Christ, so ignorant and superstitious, that a Roman saying ran, "credulous as a Jew" (*credat Judaeus*—a Jew may believe that). "And to this day," says Kinglake ("Eothen"), "the efficacy of magic is undisputed in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt: there is no controversy about the matter." Even in Europe the belief in miracles still lingers in the more backward and uneducated parts of Romanist countries.

Both before and after the time of Christ a mass of miracle and legend has gathered round the names of saints and heroes. King Arthur of Britain strove with dragons; while Ignatius Loyola, Dunstan, and other holy men had daily encounters with demons and bogies.

The belief in thaumaturgy was universal: Christ himself believed that anyone could work a wonder, if not by God's help, at any rate by that of the devil, as is evident from Matt. xii. 27. "Aucun grand événement de l'histoire ne s'est passé sans donner lieu à un cycle de fables," says Renan.

There was in the world's childhood a strong appetite for the marvellous. Wordsworth says ("Prelude") "this craving must have its food." But sooner or later there comes a day, for the individual, as for the race, when "that delightful time of growing youth" is past,—

" When craving for the marvellous gives way  
To strengthening love for things that we have seen ;  
When sober truth and steady sympathies  
Take firmer hold of us."

"The reign of wonder is perennial, indestructible in man" (Carlyle, "Sartor") ; nor has the longing for miracles disappeared, for miracles are a reaction against materialism, as surely as atheism is a reaction against dogma. "A wicked and adulterous generation will always seek after signs" (Matt. xii. 39). The supernatural is no longer within them, they must seek it without ; this is the meaning of the text. Hence table-turning, spirit-rapping, and the rest.

Those who see no marvel in the opening bud, or in the ripening corn, will ever crave for miracles and magic, for darkened rooms and morbid manifestations.

It is natural for man to seek some point of contact with the Deity. If this be not found in music or ideal art, or in the pursuit of science for its own sake, and above all in the apocalyptic visions of the poet, for "poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history," then the soul will fall back on sensational tales and the cheap marvels which the priest provides

As true religion is associated with enlightenment and progress, so the supernatural is the constant mark of superstition. "The worship of the supernatural must legitimately end in atheism" (Robertson, "Advent Lecture") ; for it begins in superstition, which is the parent of atheism. In his sermon on the healing of Jairus' daughter, this same writer attempts the only possible defence of miracles. We listen humbly and with reverence to the words of so good a man, but we are compelled to differ from him on this

question, and to appeal to his own words just quoted from the "Advent Lecture."

The meaning of the term "supernatural" is well explained by Professor Momerie in his "Basis of Religion."

After all, the question of miracles in past ages is one of little or no importance. What may have happened in Galilee eighteen hundred years ago is of no possible consequence to us. But there *is* a miracle which concerns each man closely—a greater wonder than those worked in Palestine—and that is the freeing of the human heart from sin and selfishness.

The New Testament miracles will always puzzle unimaginative people. In the "Picture of Jesus," a volume of an interesting series by Haweis, we find a grotesque account of the miracle of Cana in Galilee, and a false theory of miracles in general. Christ smuggles a quantity of wine on to the premises; then, when the host and guests have "well drunk," and are less observant than usual, he transfers this wine "quickly and quietly" to some water-pots. Truly this is worthy of Scarron! And Mr. Haweis calls this a "natural" explanation.

Better the simple credulity of our childhood than explanations which degrade and desecrate the beautiful legend.

A very slight acquaintance with comparative mythology makes it clear that Christ is here represented as playing the part of Dio-nusos (confer Javeh-nissi), the bright god of power and plenty worshipped in the East under various names. Beneath the fiery glance of the sun-god the watery vine sap changes to the ruddy juice of the grape.

"Vidit et erubuit conscia lympha deum."

The schoolboy who penned this pentameter possessed more imagination, more insight, and more sympathy with Eastern modes of thought than most of the artists who paint for us the "Picture of Jesus."

This miracle at Cana marks the moment when the solar hero enters on the period of his power. The pure and lovely dawn,

the fresh and pleasant twilight of the morning hours is past. Mary, the virgin mother, must be left : " lady, what have I to do with thee ! " Half-proud of her bright and glorious son, and half in awe of him, she shrinks away, silent and sad. So Paris and Oenone part ; so all the solar heroes forsake their early love, so all men leave their early innocence behind.

But there is a second twilight in the life of man, another period of peace and purity, when the holy thoughts of early life are once more welcome to the soul. As the evening draws on, the calm that we had lost returns. " Youth and its powers return to the true heart, however troubled it has been " (Stopford Brooke, " Theology in the English Poets," a delightful volume).

So Oenone is reunited to Paris e'er he yields his spirit ; and Mary, though dismissed at Cana, weeps below the cross. There, too, stands John, the beloved one, ready, like Philoctetes, to perform the last behests of the departing hero.

If we wish to understand the miracles attributed to Christ or to Heracles, we must refuse all explanations which mar their beauty and vulgarise their poetry, and we must enter into the spirit of these ancient allegories.

Above all, we must not stultify the Bible legends by isolating them from those of the other religions of antiquity.

## 14.—PROPHECY AND PREACHING.

THE ancients thought that God gives to good men certain indications of events to come, and they imagined that by observing the flight of birds, and in other ways, it is possible to obtain omens of success or failure in an enterprise. The Roman augurs "divined" in this way, and both the word "augur" and "auspice" contain the root of "avis," a bird. The astrologers of Chaldæa professed to forecast the future by observing the constellations and the motions of the planets.

The gipsy tells fortunes by chiromancy or palmistry ; and there are many other forms of divination.

Dreams were thought to be messages from God (Gen. xl. and xli. ; Matt. ii. 13 ; Acts xvi. 19). So also in Homer the dream is divine, "theios oneiros," it comes from Zeus, "onar ek Dios estin."

And the drawing of a lot was supposed to be overruled by Providence (Prov. xvi. 33 ; Jonah i. 7 ; Acts i. 26).

The power of foretelling the future was claimed by the priests of Delphi in Greece, and of other temples called oracles. Rising to a state of excitement bordering on frenzy, they gave their answers, thinking, as did also their hearers, that men in this condition are under the influence of some god (confer *mantis* and *mainomai*). To speak or preach in this way is called "prophesying" in the New Testament. Thus the early Christians "prophesied" when the fiery enthusiasm of Pentecost was upon them, and some of those who heard them said, "These men are full of new wine" (Acts ii. 13).

It is certain that God does not reveal the future, even to the holiest of men. Nevertheless, in all these ideas there is a germ of truth ; for the ancients, though unacquainted with spectrum analysis or the calculus, were as well able as we are to estimate their relation to God and to humanity. The opinions of an-



tiquity are to be considered, not so much as errors, but rather as dim and imperfect views of truth :

“Omnibus veris falsa quædam adjuncta sunt.”

The ancients felt and recognised that men of great heart and intellect who “walk with God,” and, like Enoch, are “initiated” into the mysteries of religion, obtained an insight which appears to the world to be miraculous. This “walk with God,” these communings with the nymph Egeria, these “*commercium coeli*,” fit the prophet for his task, which is not indeed to unveil the future, but to proclaim at his risk unwelcome truths ; for new truths are ever unwelcome, “*veritas odium parit*” (Terence, “*Andria*”).

A prophet is simply an earnest and enlightened man, a “seer” who *sees* things as they are ; and it is natural that the same clear sight should enable him also to *foresee*, for “coming events cast their shadows before.” Thus Daniel alone was able to decipher the writing on the wall (Dan. v. 17), and Micaiah alone of the four hundred prophets (1 Kings xxii.) had the courage to tell the two kings that pride and aggression go before destruction (Prov. xvi. 18). And when dark days come upon the world, and the fire of faith burns low, the eyes of the prophet are the first to catch the glimmer of the coming dawn. Like Simeon (Luke ii. 25), he knows the infant Christ whom others think an ordinary child. Like Elijah he hears the still small voice which whispers in the solitude (1 Kings xix. 12). He dreams, like John, in Patmos, of a “new heaven and a new earth” (Rev. xxvi. 1), and these dreams find an echo in the heart of humanity.

“The prophet,” says Emerson, “exercises the highest functions of human nature. He raises himself from private considerations, and breathes and lives on public and illustrious thoughts. He is the world’s eyes, he is the world’s heart ; he is to resist the vulgar prosperity that retrogrades ever to barbarism ; and whatever new verdict reason from her inviolable seat pronounces on the passing men and events of to-day, this he shall declare.”

Writing in the same spirit, Matthew Arnold says of the Hebrew prophets that "their unique grandeur consists, not in the foretelling of details, but in the unerring vision with which they saw, and the unflinching boldness and sublime force with which they said that nothing based upon unrighteousness can stand."

The true prophet is what the Pope of Rome claims to be : the representative or "vicar of God" upon the earth ; he is "Emmanuel" or "God with us." This title is in no way peculiar to Christ ; it belongs to every champion of right, to all who are "valiant for the truth upon the earth" (Jer. ix. 3).



## 15.—INSPIRATION.

By inspiration, we mean that high and holy thoughts are suggested or breathed into (*inspiro*) us by God; in other words, that such thoughts arise from the higher part of our nature, which is an emanation from God, and which is in contact with Him, as our bodies are in contact with the earth. All books containing such thoughts may be called "inspired," whether written in ancient days or by ourselves. The Rev. H. R. Haweis ("Winged Words") thus defines inspiration, and we may accept his definition without reserve: "Inspiration is a level of moral teaching and spiritual truth above the average of the age."

The highest inspiration comes only to the highest intellects, to men of fervent and commanding genius, or, as Disraeli ("Tancred") says, "Divine Majesty has never thought fit to communicate except with human beings of the very highest powers."

The priest would have us draw a hard and fast line between inspired and uninspired books, as also between "sacred" and "secular" music, and so forth. How unreasonable is this! Is there, then, no inspiration in the "Pilgrim's Progress," in the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius or of Epictetus? Could the most bigoted Calvinist deny inspiration to Thomas à Kempis? Are the writings of Carlyle, Ruskin, Emerson, Theodore Parker, James Martineau and a hundred others devoid of inspiration. Who is to draw this hard and fast line for us? It is obvious that he must be himself inspired who would decide on the inspiration of others, and establish the "canon of Scripture," as it is called. When did inspiration cease upon this earth? At what precise moment in history did God desert this world, and leave men forever without His divine guidance?

There is no very great savour of inspiration about a good deal of the Apocrypha, which, nevertheless, "the Church doth

read for example and instruction." Have we not many a modern book from which more "example and instruction" may be derived? And if so, why do we not read them in our churches? The more we inquire into the orthodox theory of inspiration, the more absurd and irrational it seems. In the New Testament, again, we have the writings of the "fathers," the Pastor of Hermas, etc., which are supposed to be, like the Apocrypha, neither quite inspired, nor yet wholly secular; they are on the line, in fact. How are we to explain this partial inspiration? How is it that the "Epistle to the Hebrews" was rejected by one half of the early Christians, and the "Revelation" by the other half? Either the early Christians were very bad judges of inspiration, or else both these books are very doubtful. Which must we believe of those two alternatives?

Again, the Bible contains a mass of matter which men could write without the help of inspiration. Surely it did not need the finger of God to pen the Song of Solomon! The book of Ecclesiastes contains also a great deal that is not worthy of a good man, much less of the Deity; and there are many passages which, if inspired at all, are certainly inspired by Satan.

Archdeacon Farrar admits that "the old dogma of the verbal dictation of the Bible by God has become too baseless an absurdity for any well-instructed and unbiassed intelligence to maintain." But this admission does not go nearly far enough. The plain truth must sooner or later be acknowledged that these Hebrew books, like any other books, are inspired just as far as the men who wrote them were honest, earnest, and enlightened. The whole "orthodox" theory of inspiration, revelation, prophecy, and miracle is beyond any possible stretch of credulity. "Orthodoxy" must either defend itself by quibbling and Jesuitry, or boldly accept the motto, "*credo quia absurdum.*"

## 16.—BIBLES AND SACRED BOOKS.

THE Bible is a collection of books by different authors. They are bound up together, but ought to be printed separately, as they are of very different value. The word "Bible" is simply the Greek for "book." The part called "Old Testament" consists of a number of Hebrew books; these contain the history, mythology, poetry, and ritual, or religious observances of the Jewish race. These books are set down to certain authors; but the fact is that we know nothing whatever about the date or the authorship of many of them. The part called "New Testament" consists of a number of Greek books. These contain four different versions of the life of Christ, and some of the writings of the earliest Christians. It is possible that the first three Gospels are based on some earlier book in Hebrew or Syriac. The fourth Gospel is a sort of romance, probably written much later than the others.

These books are attributed to some friends of Christ called "apostles," that is, "men sent out" to preach, or "disciples," that is, "pupils" or "learners."

In the New Testament there is much that is true and beautiful, especially the teaching of Christ. In the Old Testament some books are of the greatest value, some, again, are of little interest.

The Psalms are the highest poetry ever written; nearer to God than this, the human spirit cannot rise.

On the other hand, much of Solomon's writing is worthless, as we might expect, for he was a bestial man (1 Kings xi. 3), and a materialist who repeatedly denies a future state (Eccl. iii. 19; vi. 6; ix. 5 and 10), and affirms that the sum of wisdom is to eat and drink (Eccl. ii. 24; viii. 15).

"The Hebrew and Greek scriptures (or writings) contain im-

mortal sentences, which have been the bread of life to millions; but they have no epical integrity, they are fragmentary, and are not shown in their order to the intellect. We look for the new teacher who shall follow so far those shining laws, that he shall see them come to a full circle, shall see their rounding, complete grace, shall see the world to be the mirror of the soul, shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart, and shall show that the 'ought' or duty is one thing with science, with beauty, and with joy" (Emerson, "Nature").

Few are so dull and brutish as not to appreciate the Psalms, to be stirred by the Sermon on the Mount, and moved by the tragedy of Calvary.

But the Hebrew literature can be properly understood and appreciated by those only who read it without superstition and prejudice. Only in the light of comparative mythology can we see the full importance of the beautiful legends of Genesis, for these appear to be fragments from an earlier Chaldaean cycle. "Bien que ce récit, qui n'est lui même que le résumé de traditions plus anciennes, offre de nombreuses lacunes, et bien des points obscurs, et qu'il ne soit pas possible de le prendre toujours à la lettre, il renferme assez d'éléments positifs pour donner un aperçu général des premières vicissitudes de la société humaine." These are the words of a thoughtful and reverent writer (Ott, "L'Asie Accidentale").

Again, Moses is greater when viewed as a legislator than as a mere conjurer, and the spiritual history of the "chosen people" becomes doubly instructive when we see in the Hebrews nothing more or less than an Arab tribe raised to great power about 1,000 B.C. by their love of a simple, agricultural life, and their deep-rooted regard for righteousness; then decaying, just as other nations do, when this simplicity and love of right was undermined and corrupted by wealth and prosperity.

As the Old Testament shows us the spectacle of a religion arising from the contact of the Cushite with the later, higher, and more spiritual Semitic race, at the spot where Asia meets Africa (for the Dead Sea basin is in close geographical connection with Africa), so

in the New Testament we see another religion springing from the intercourse of the Semitic Syrians with the still later and higher Aryan Greeks.

It is but natural that Palestine should have moulded the mind of humanity, for in this strange region met and mingled the three noblest of the races of man.

As Jerusalem and the lower part of Palestine were closely connected with Egypt (Gen. xii. 10; Gen. xlii; 2 Kings xviii. 21; Matt. ii. 14), so the Greek city of Antioch at the northern extremity of Syria was, as it were, a link between Asia and Europe. Here Christianity took shape (Acts xi. 26, and xiii. 1), or, in the words of the Bible commentaries, "this city was the centre of Gentile evangelisation."

On these two great events the whole Bible history turns, and they are perhaps the most important in the intellectual development of the human race; for they are stages in the advance of that idealism which raises man to the level of the angels, and crowns him with glory and honour (Heb. ii. 7).

The Bible is, in fact, a text-book of idealism, illustrated and enforced by the history of the Hebrew race; and no one can be considered educated who is not acquainted with its narrative and familiar with its teaching.

The Protestant princes at the Diet of Spire wore on their arms the letters V. D. M. I. Æ.—"Verbum Domini manet in aeternum" (1 Peter i. 25). This was the watchword of the earliest reformers, and it must also be ours; but the "word of God" is not confined within the covers of the Bible; whatever honest and earnest men have spoken or written in any language anywhere, that is for us the "word of God."

The Bible commences with a retrospect, and closes with a prospect. Genesis states what was known in those early days about the origin of the human race; the book of Revelation, an Eastern poem, dreams of our destiny when life is done. The one searches out the past, the other reaches forward to the future. We must look back; for the past is the prophet of the future. We must look forward, for without the future, both past and present in-

terest us no more. We crave to know both "whence" and "whither," yet both are hidden from our sight. The problem of the future, like that of the past, is insoluble. In the former case the mystery meets us at the outset; in the latter, it awaits us when we have penetrated through embryology and palæontology to the primordial protoplasm.

By all means let us listen to what science can tell us of the ages that are past; and of our slow ascent and genesis. Let us look backward and downward. But shall we not also look forward and upward? Shall we not hearken when the poet sings of a "new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter iii. 13). Deep would be the gloom were we to blot out the bright visions of Patmos, and stop our ears to all that poets tell us of brighter days to come.

The Bible of humanity must contain not only its Genesis, but also its Apocalypse.



## 17.—GOD AND NATURE.

WHAT do we mean when we repeat the words, "I believe in God?" We mean that Nature is sacred and divine, and that it is wrong to outrage Nature in any way, to desecrate the landscape, to pollute the streams, to lay bare the wooded hill, and to destroy the beauty of the earth.

We mean to say that the laws of Nature are inviolable, and that it is fatal to oppose them; that health and happiness depend in great measure on our studying to conform to these laws. And above all, we affirm that there is in Nature a Spirit, kindred to our own, who animates all things, and whom we call God (Acts xvii. 25). "Man is conscious of a Universal Soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine" (Emerson).

"The difficulty of all difficulties is to believe in a living and true God, who loves his creatures. It is a difficulty which no argument can remove, which the progress of ages does not diminish, and which is often most overpowering to the most religious men" (Maurice, "Lessons of Hope," p. 30). We do not attempt to deny this difficulty, although we theists feel it less than the author just quoted, hampered as he is by a mass of superstitious dogmas. But we do believe firmly, because we find it a thousand times easier than not to believe, because we have looked out upon the world from every other standpoint and found no satisfying solution to the riddle of life, because we have wandered hither and thither and found no other resting-place. When dark doubts assail us we can only echo the prayer of the afflicted father in Mark ix. 24.

Neither the providence of God, nor the "life of the world to come," can be proved by logic, and it is useless to reason about these truths with persons who deny them. Nor, on the other

hand, can these two cardinal truths be disproved by any syllogism. It is possible, apparently, for certain natures to be holy and happy without believing these things, and it is unfortunately possible for men who believe them to be miserable, like the poet Cowper.

In like manner, justice, honour, honesty, and many other things cannot be seen or proved, nor yet disproved, by any arguments whatever, yet we believe in them, or pretend to.

Marcus Aurelius ("Meditations," bk. ii.) says, "A world without either Gods or Providence is not worth a man's while to live in." And indeed annihilation were a welcome refuge from a God-forsaken universe.

These abstract ideas slowly developed among the higher races of man as idealism gained ground, and it is most probable, nay, most certain, that the supreme abstraction of idealism, the belief in an ever-present Deity, will not fade from the minds of men, but root deeper with the lapse of time. For "the longing for fraternity can never be satisfied but under the sway of a common father" (Disraeli, "Tancred"). Schiller, too ("An die Freude"), couples human brotherhood with the Fatherhood of God: "Brüder über'm Sternenzelt muss ein lieber Vater wohnen." "A gracious Spirit o'er this world presides, and o'er the heart of man" (Wordsworth, "Prelude"). Coleridge also ("Religious Musings") insists that man can unite only in God:

" 'Tis the sublime of man,  
Our noontide majesty, to know ourselves  
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole.  
*This fraternises man*, this constitutes  
Our charities and bearings. But 'tis God  
Diffused through all that doth make all one whole.

The symbol of the Deity is a triangle in a circle.



## 18.—CHRIST AND HUMANITY.

THE second article of the popular creed is belief in Christ. We may treat this question and most similar ones in two ways. We may simply meet the statement with a flat denial. This method recommends itself to earnest and simple-minded folk. It was used by the more advanced Protestants in the Reformation, and is carried to an extreme by Unitarians. But it can lead us only to a string of negations, from which a terrible reaction is inevitable.

In dealing with a belief or a statement which is half true and half false, we cannot say either yes or no without being entangled. The best and the most straightforward course is to refuse either to affirm or to deny these half truths, and, at the same time to seek out and re-affirm the original truth, which in the popular creed had become obscured and distorted. It is precisely the dim consciousness which we have of a deeper meaning in many of these ancient formulæ which lends them such a strange vitality.

If, in the present instance, we substitute the words, "I believe that humanity is sacred and divine," for the time-honoured formula, "I believe in Christ," we shall be making no unwarrantable alteration. On the contrary, we shall be merely expressing in the language of the nineteenth century the same thought which was—ill-defined, perhaps, but not less truly—in the minds of those who framed the creeds. For the solar hero represents humanity, Christ, like all other martyrs of truth, is truly "son of man" or type of humanity, as the four evangelists assert (Matt. viii. 20 ; Mark viii. 38 ; Luke v. 24 ; John i. 51). He is an idealised human character, just as the Apollo Belvedere is an idealised human figure. It does not concern us to know, even if we could discover it, what Syrian enthusiast was the original of the ideal Christ of the Gospels, any more than we are interested in finding

out what Greek athlete served as model for the statue of the sun-god. Both are beautiful in their way : it is good to contemplate the one and the other.

Men of earnest character and spiritual insight have perceived this most important truth. Thus the saint and hero, General Gordon, said, "I have been visiting Christ in the east-end of London:" for suffering humanity is Christ (Matt. xxv. 40), and we need none other.

In this light we can explain how such passages as John xiv. 6, "no man cometh unto the Father but by me," could be put into the mouth of Christ. If these words mean that no other prophet ever pointed men to a higher life, they are absolutely false. But if the early Christian writer, John, or whoever else he may have been, was thinking of Christ as a type of humanity, then he uttered in Eastern style an everlasting truth which we should express thus in the language of the present day: The way to heaven and to the knowledge of God is not through philosophy or theology, not by meditation and asceticism, still less by Church and sacrament, nor yet by any scheme of redemption, but by the active service of humanity.

It follows, from the doctrine of divine humanity, that it is wrong to let men live in poverty and misery without culture, and without recreation. Man, "who is made in the image of the Gods" (Gen. i. 26) may not be thus degraded, or a retribution must follow. For man is "his brother's keeper" (Gen. iv. 9); or, in other words, we are answerable for all the human misery that can be prevented.

This attitude towards our fellow-men is what Paul extols as charity (1 Cor. xiii.), and it is one and the same with the more modern "enthusiasm of humanity."

"In faith and hope the world will disagree,  
But all mankind's concern is charity."—*Pope*,

The symbol of Christ and of humanity is a cross, which represents the suffering through which the soul is made perfect (Heb. ii. 10). "Pathēmata mathēmata."

This symbol is borrowed by Christianity from earlier religions. The Egyptians, for instance, had their *crux ansata* (a cross with a ring above it).

Christmas is the festival of the solar hero and of humanity. This occurs about the time of the New Year, when the sun is born, as it were, that is, when the days begin to lengthen.

The origin of the cross or sacred tree has been explained by G. Massey in the "Natural Genesis," chap. vii.

## 19.—HOLY GHOST AND CONSCIENCE.

THE next article of the popular creed is belief in the Holy Ghost. "Ghost"—German, "Geist"—means "spirit," and the Latin word "spiritus" means "breath." Who or what is this holy spirit which forms the third person of the Christian trinity or triad? The answer is not far to seek: we may express it thus, "I believe that conscience is sacred and divine."

It is no mere accident that the doctrines of divine humanity and sacred conscience are so closely associated in the popular creed with belief in God. For the great Spirit of Nature, so far above and beyond our intelligence, could hardly be known to us were He not "revealed" or "unveiled" in the conscience within us and in humanity around us.

Reverence for conscience is not a special feature of Christianity. A Greek verse runs: "Brotoisi pasin hē suneidēsis theos."

"To every mortal, conscience is divine."

Bacon poetically calls it "a sparkle of the purity of our first estate." Shakespeare says that "conscience makes cowards of us all." But conscience should rather give courage and comfort to the good: for it is indeed the "Holy Spirit" or witness of God within us, the "Paraclete" or "Comforter" (John xiv. 26) sustaining us when other comfort fails.

The "answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Peter iii. 21) is not a mere empty phrase (whether the Greek will bear this translation or not). When the human will is in perfect accord with the divine, a harmony is heard within the soul. This answering note is a reality, though, like the tartini tones on the violin, it be not audible to all ears and at all times. The

true saint hears this answering voice by day and night. "Never say that you are alone," says Epictetus, "for God and your guardian angel (that is your conscience) are ever with you." No philosopher has ventured to assert that the "daemon" of Socrates was either an imposture or a hallucination (Zeller's Socrates, ch. iv.).

The Holy Ghost and conscience are none other than the voice of God which echoes in the ears of him who has given up all for an ideal, "this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased," (Matt. iii. 17). Young says :

" Who conscience sent, her verdict will support,  
And God above assert that God in man."

For, as the same poet reminds us, "conscience is a part of nature."

The symbol of the "Holy Ghost" and of conscience is a dove. This also is borrowed from more ancient religions. The Assyrian god, Asshur, was represented as a bird with outstretched wings.

The feast or festival of the Holy Spirit or conscience is Pentecost or Whitsunday. Pentecost is from the Greek word for fifty, because the Christian feast took the place of an ancient Hebrew one, which occurred "a week of weeks," or fifty days after Easter. This old festival was a harvest home.

## 20.—FAITH.

THE love of truth and beauty, of what is "fair and good," "Kalon kai agathon," leads us to avoid what is false and base. But there are times when the strife with evil and falsehood involves loss, suffering, and even death. In such a crisis the idealist is sustained by the conviction that "it is well with the righteous," as Matthew Arnold expresses it, or, in other words, that the souls of the just are in the keeping of God. This conviction is faith, nor need we any closer definition, or any dogma to repeat. Shadrach and his two companions had faith (Dan. i.). This same confidence inspired Stephen, the first martyr of Christianity (Acts vi., vii.). And at the Reformation, in the sixteenth century, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer were full of faith. Faith sustained the five millions of Protestants who were burned and tortured by the Jesuits in the Inquisition.

The evangelicals rightly say that faith is the essence of religion. "Justification by faith" is a cardinal doctrine of their creed. We, too, hold that without faith all noble action is paralysed, for "we live by faith" (Heb. x. 38); and we heartily endorse these words of Froude: "All that is grand, sublime, and of benefit to the race has come out of faith, and not out of scepticism." In Hebrews xi. 1, Paul gives his well-known description of faith, and throughout the same chapter he shows that all the heroes of the Hebrew race were supported and sustained by faith.

## 21.—RITUAL AND SYMBOLISM.

MANY Protestants have an unreasoning objection to all symbolism and ritual, which they confound with sacerdotalism and formalism. But there is no necessary connection between ritual and "Popery," and we should do well to reflect that, by giving the Romanist a monopoly of symbolic teaching, we are placing a sharp sword in the hands of the enemies of human progress.

It is a serious mistake to regard the Reformation as a protest against symbolic teaching and the use of ceremonial in religious worship. It is a mark of ignorance to identify symbolism with superstition, for symbolism may be used in the service of truth. It is against sacerdotalism and formalism that the protest of the Reformation was made. "The strength of the Puritan protest lay in the deep and true conviction that God is living and reigning, and that He has not delegated His powers to any body of ministers, or shut up His grace in any ceremonies" (Maurice, "Lessons of Hope," p. 237).

Ritualism is teaching or affirming hidden truths by means of outward symbols or observances. If I take off my hat, or shake hands, these are symbolic actions expressive of respect or goodwill. Kneeling, or prostrating oneself as the Russians do, or holding up the hands as the Romans did, *duplices tendens ad sidera palmas*, and also the Hebrews (Exod. xvii. 11), this is an act of ritual. So also is uncovering the head in church, or the feet in entering a mosque. The sweet-smelling incense which the Romanists burn in their churches is a beautiful symbol of aspiration. How hopelessly irrational is that prejudice which permits music to please the ear, stained windows and noble architecture to please the eye and delight the sense of beauty, and yet refuses to recognise the sense of smell! We stultify ourselves still further by the exile of painting and sculpture from our churches.



The never-dying flame of the temple of Vesta, and those fires which flicker before the altar in the Church of Rome, serve to remind us of the flame of faith.

The clear water in the font is an emblem of purity ; nor needs it any priestly consecration to make it "holy."

The sign of the cross which the pious peasant makes in moments of pain or peril is the mark of suffering humanity, and a token of submission to the divine will. In like manner the anchor represents hope, the heart good-will, the ring in marriage (objected to by many of the Protestant dissenters) lapse of time, and so on.

Ritual is necessary, not only for the instruction and "edification" of those whose minds are slow to apprehend abstract ideas, but even the highest intellect cannot dispense with symbolism.

"Spirit may mingle with spirit, but sense requireth a symbol," says Tupper, with not inelegant alliteration, and here at any rate there is wisdom in his words. Sir T. Browne ("Rel. Med." iii.) may be quoted to the same effect : "I love to use those outward and sensible motions which may express or promote my invisible devotion."

The human spirit "searches the deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10), but they tend to fade away and become dim, because we cannot fully grasp them. Even in the moments of greatest exaltation we can see only "the hem of the garment of Deity," for "the Deity can be known to us only through some type or figure" (Plato). But concrete things, as Swedenborg has shown, help to direct the mind to those abstract ideas of which they are the types. We must not, however, confound the concrete with the abstract, the type with the antitype, the statue with the Deity. Nor must we make ceremonies and observances, which are merely helps to religion, a substitute for religion. "Si tantum in exterioribus observantiis profectum religionis ponimus, cito finem habebit devotio nostra" ("Imitatio").

Symbolism may be employed in the service of superstition and falsehood, as for instance in the mummeries of Romanism and of



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Anglican ritualism, but its true function is to teach those higher truths which we see "in a glass darkly" (1 Cor. xiii. 12), and which can never be defined or expressed in exact language, for they transcend the power of words.

Christ, as was the custom in the East, taught religion by means of parables, just as Æsop conveyed moral lessons in his fables.

## 22.—SACRAMENTS AND CEREMONIES.

It is fitting that the great events connected with our life should be marked by some simple and suitable ceremony. Such a ceremony is called a "sacrament." The Roman Church has seven sacraments, the Anglican only two. There are really four natural sacraments, for the important events connected with our life are four. First, birth; second, puberty or coming of age; third, marriage, by which the race is continued; fourth, death, which is the end of this stage of existence.

To these four great events the four great sacraments correspond—*viz.*, baptism, confirmation, marriage, and the last rites, the "*proxima justa*" of the Romans.

The ceremony of the Eucharist, whose real purpose it is to remind us from time to time of the brotherhood of man, and so to hold in check that fierce spirit of competition which drives us to destroy each other, is of such supreme importance that we may regard it also as a sacrament.

## 23.—BAPTISM.

BAPTISM is dedication to God. But the ceremony has been perverted in the interest of the priesthood, in order that an infant may be prematurely committed to certain creeds and dogmas. The priest has further added the blasphemous doctrine that it is not possible to stand well with God without being baptised.

The Hebrews had a barbarous rite called "circumcision," by which a male infant was marked for life, so that he could never change his religion or his nationality.<sup>1</sup>

The Romanist, and also the "orthodox" Anglican theory of baptism, is that some evil is expelled from a child by the administration of the rite (Robertson).

This belief in the efficacy of sacraments and ceremonies is a delusion which defies reason, a disease of the mind beyond the reach of hellebore. This is the verdict of Robertson on "baptismal regeneration": "The eternal Spirit who rules this universe must wait patiently, and come obedient to a mortal's spell to perform a magical operation at the moment which suits our convenience." This theory, he says, is degrading—"it is materialism of the grossest kind." The error must indeed be rank which can extort from a cleric such strong expressions of disapproval!

That man must be far gone in bigotry who objects to the ring in marriage or to the sign of the cross in baptism. But it is irrational to use these or any other symbols, unless they have for us in this present day a definite meaning and import. Water in infant baptism has no meaning for us, or rather, it symbolises no truth that we can accept. For water implies the washing away

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus tells us that the Egyptians also practised this abominable custom. It is probable that the Jews learnt it from them.

of sins. This may be appropriate enough to adult baptism, or the admission of a grown-up person to the fellowship and privileges of a religious body ; but an infant, who has done no right nor wrong as yet, can have no sins to wash away.

The following may serve to give an idea of the ceremony of baptism as a theist would wish to have it :

1. Hymn.

2. So-and-So and So-and-So desire to thank God for the gift of a son (or a daughter), and they call us to witness their steadfast purpose to instruct him by example and by precept in the truths of religion and the practise of morality.

May he grow up to be, by God's grace, a support and a comfort to his parents and a credit to the religion which we profess.

3. His name is So-and-So.

I make on his forehead the sign of the cross, the sacred symbol of humanity, in token that he is dedicated, not to a life of worldliness or pleasure, but to the help and service of man. We hope and pray that he may ever be found among those who prefer honour and honesty to advantage and success.

May he side with the poor and the oppressed rather than with the rich and the powerful ; and may he so learn the lessons of this life and perform its duties that he may be found worthy at the last to enter on a higher and a happier state.

4. Hymn.

## 24 —CONFIRMATION.

CONFIRMATION is a public declaration that a boy or girl is now no longer a child, but is answerable for his or her actions, and is old enough to take part in the serious duties and responsibilities of life.

Thus the young Roman, in his sixteenth year, at the time of the vernal Equinox, assumed the *toga virilis*, and entered on the rights of citizenship. And the young Indian, having given proof of skill and courage, is admitted to rank among the warriors of his tribe. The custom is common to civilised men and to savages. It is universal, because it is founded on Nature.

Confirmation, like baptism and marriage, is a season of rejoicing.

In Romanist countries little children are presented for the "première communion." This reduces the rite to an absurdity. The tendency of sacerdotalism is ever thus to distort and degrade a natural and useful ceremony until it becomes an object of ridicule and aversion.

The form of this ceremony, or of any other, is of very little importance, so long as the spirit is preserved: "the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii. 6).

The following may be taken as a suggestion :

"These young men and women here present desire to thank God, our heavenly Father, that they have by His great mercy escaped the perils of infancy and the dangers of early life. They rejoice that they have been taught the lessons of morality and the truths of religion; and they now enter on the duties of life, purposing by God's grace so to live, that they may do no discredit to the faith in which they have been trained, but pass through life as useful members of society. And we who now witness their good resolve, do earnestly hope and pray that they may triumph over the temptations and trials of life, and be accounted

worthy at the last to enter on a higher sphere of usefulness and happiness."

A hymn may precede and follow this short prayer.

The following "Rule of Life" will not come amiss to those entering on the duties of life :

*Lebens-regel.*

" Im Glück nicht jubeln, und im Sturm nicht zagen :  
Das Unvermeidliche mit Würde tragen  
Das Gute schätzen, an dem Schönen sich erfreun :  
Und fest an Gott und bessere Zukunft glauben :  
Heisst leben, heisst dem Tod die Schrecken rauben."

*Translation.*

Be not elated in prosperity,  
Nor in adversity too much cast down :  
Bear bravely what is unavoidable :  
Treasure all good things, and delight yourself  
In all things beautiful : believe in God  
And immortality : so shall you live  
Nobly, nor fear to meet life's latest hour.

## 25.—THE EUCHARIST AND FRATERNITY.

THE early Christians used to meet and hold a dinner, supper, love-feast, or agapemone, in memory of their departed teacher, and in token of their brotherhood.

This was a beautiful custom, for the bread and wine which they ate and drank together were symbols of their common dependence on the bounty of the God of Nature, and pledges of their fidelity to their faith.

The Eucharist was a *bona fide* meal, no mouthing of little scraps of "consecrated" bread or "wafers," no muttering of magical words by priest or parson—a *bona fide* meal in which rich and poor, learned and ignorant, refined and rude, met together and forgot for the time their social distinctions. It was a periodic assertion of human brotherhood or fraternity, which the fierce competition of life makes us forget.

On the coins of the French Republic is engraved the motto, "liberty, equality, fraternity." Mazzini ("Europe") well and wisely rejects "this great formula which the imitative mind of democracy has rendered European."

Of these three magic words, the first, "liberty," is for those few only who, being subject to the higher laws of God and Nature, the "law of liberty" (Jas. ii. 12), and being partakers of the "glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans viii. 21), need not the restraints of human authority and law. For all others, liberty is liable to degenerate into licence. "Deo parere libertas est" (Seneca).

"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,  
And all are slaves beside."—*Cowper*, "Task."

So Lessing ("Nathan") :

"Es sind nicht alle frei die ihrer Ketten spotten :"  
All are not free who laugh their bonds to scorn.



Ch. Kingsley ("Town Geology") says, "As men grow older, they begin to see not only that things are wrong, but also that the freedom-mill can do very little towards grinding them right again."

The second term of the famous French motto, "equality," is a thing which never yet existed nor can exist. There is no equality or approach to equality among men, or among the lower animals. Even in a pack of wolves there is one that howls louder than the rest.

One amœba or a protococcus may be very similar to another, but as we rise in the scale of life this similarity disappears, and with it equality. In the monotonous pine forests of the North one tree resembles another for hundreds of miles. But in the higher (angiospermous) vegetation of the Tropics there is endless diversity; no two trees are similar in beauty or in usefulness. Some men have more brain, more heart, more courage, and more energy than their neighbours. It is, as Ruskin says, the part of such men to take the lead, and the duty of smaller, weaker men to follow.

"Thus let the wiser make the rest obey."—*Pope*.

The downfall of Samaria was not far distant when "the lowest of the people" began to keep the conscience of the nation (1 Kings xiii. 31). Perhaps we have in this fact the clue to the disappearance of the ten tribes from history.

But fraternity is an ideal of which we require to be frequently reminded. The Eucharist might serve this most important purpose, if it were restored to its original intention; but, on the other hand, "if no heart warm this rite," says Emerson, "the hollow, dry, creaking formality is all too plain." Charity is, indeed, the very essence of the Eucharist, that charity which is not satisfied with writing a cheque or paying a subscription.

"The holy supper is kept, indeed,  
In whatso we share with another's need.  
Not what we give, but what we share,  
For the gift without the giver is bare."

*Lowell*, "Vision of Sir Laufnal."

But the "holy supper" has unfortunately degenerated into a mysterious performance presided over by a priest, to which he attaches a magical efficacy. With a bobbing of heads and a tinkling of little bells, and, as likely as not, with his tongue in his cheek, he goes through the pantomime ; he mutters his "hoc est corpus," and the poor folk, craving for religion, are put off with "hocus pocus !" "The god Pan is dead," but the god Panis has taken his place !

This superstitious rite is now "celebrated," strange to say, before breakfast. It used to take place two or three times in the year—at Easter, Christmas, and so on ; then, as the Anglican Church drifted farther and farther in the direction of Rome, it was administered every Sunday. Latterly not even this was found sufficient, and we have reached the stage of "daily communion." Superstition must be added to the four things that never say "it is enough" (Prov. xxx. 15).

The "transubstantiation" of the Romanist and ritualist (for there is no difference worth mention) is a monstrous invention. In the doctrine of the "real presence" blasphemy has reached its culminating point. It never entered into the head of any pagan, of any savage, or even of any maniac, to manufacture a god and then to swallow him ! A priest alone could think of such a thing. The Thibetan makes a sacred image out of butter, but he does not eat it.

Communion should be celebrated once in the year—at Christmas, or at one of the four great festivals. If it should be looked upon in any other light than as a friendly gathering of co-religionists, it will be best to omit it altogether. The clergyman, or minister, or any person of standing in the congregation (elder), may explain the spirit and purpose of the rite in some such words as these : There need be no bated breath or affectation of solemnity as if some mystery or magic were on hand.

"We are met together in the sight of God, our heavenly Father, to affirm the great truth of the brotherhood of man. We earnestly desire to lay aside our social differences and dissensions, to forget our private dislikes and jealousies, and to be in charity with

all men. We are weary of competition and warfare, and we long for the reign of peace on earth and good-will among men. We wish also to bear in mind that closer communion and spiritual fellowship which binds us to each other and to all those of every race and language who share our high and holy faith. And we wish to thank God for the heroes, prophets, saints, martyrs, and reformers who have worked and suffered for truth and progress, and particularly for those of our own race and country. May we humbly follow their good example, and so continue the work which they began, that at the last we be found worthy to share their eternal happiness and glory."

A hymn may precede and follow this prayer. Then, instead of magic wafers and sips of syrupy stuff, the younger members of the congregation will hand round honest, ordinary wine and cake, or beer and sandwiches, or tea and bread and butter. There is no half-way house possible between plain, straightforward eating and drinking, and the magic and mummary of the Romanist rite. The evening may conclude with music, or recitation of poetry, or magic-lantern views, or any useful and instructive form of recreation.

## 26.—SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS.

SUNDAY is the weekly holiday of Christian nations, absurdly called "Sabbath" by the evangelical sect. The Jewish "Sabbath" was held on a Saturday. It matters nothing what day is chosen as the holiday, nor is it even necessary that a whole nation or an entire district should keep holiday on the same day. The principle is that every man should "rest from his labour" on one day in seven. It was, of course, never contemplated that a man should rest seven days out of seven.

Sunday may be begun by some short religious ceremony or "service." The essential thing is, that it should be a day of rest, recreation, amusement, and gladness; not, as the Calvinist would have it, a day of gloom and dullness.

Keble, the high churchman, was acting sensibly when he established in his village a Sunday cricket club. It will be taken for granted that we do not mean by "amusement" the dissipations of fashionable society, still less the spectacle of a scandalous theatre piece. Every kind of amusement, like every variety of work, must be in close relation with religion, or else it will be a curse, not a blessing, to humanity. The stage has severed its ancient connection with religion, and it has become a plague-spot in our great towns and a blight upon society.

Surely some medium can be found between the wholly frivolous continental Sunday and the dismal, hateful, Calvinistic Sabbath.

## 27.—FESTIVALS.

FESTIVALS or feasts are periodical public holidays, which may last one or more days. The four great natural festivals are astronomical, and mark primarily the changes of the year. Each of them may also have a spiritual meaning.

(a) Christmas or New Year, December 21st, when the shortest day is past, and the sun is, as it were, born afresh. This is also the festival of the birth of the solar hero, as the word "Christmas" implies.

(b) Midsummer, or "La Saint Jean," the time of the longest day, June 21st.

(c) The vernal Equinox, Easter, or springtide, March 20th, when Nature is renewed. This is also the festival of the resurrection.

(d) The autumnal Equinox, or Michaelmas, September 23rd.

The minor festivals of harvest home, vintage, etc., are also natural, but their date will vary in each country and climate, as of course the dates of Christmas and Midsummer will be reserved in the Southern hemisphere.

Besides the great natural festivals which are common to all humanity, each race and nation has certain festivals peculiar to itself, instituted either to perpetuate some religious idea, or to commemorate some great event, or in honour of some distinguished man. These are conventional, not natural, and are of minor importance. Thus, the Hebrew passover commemorated the deliverance of the nation from Egyptian bondage, and July 4th in the United States is the anniversary of their Declaration of Independence. The Romanist calendar is filled with these conventional festivals, which they call "saints' days."

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There are two objections to these Roman and Anglican "saints' days" : first, that a number of quite unimportant individuals are commemorated, while many of the world's greatest "saints" are excluded. On what pretext does the Anglican Church omit Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer from her list of "saints"? Is there no nimbus round their heads forsooth? Has Britain any greater heroes, the world any greater saints? Secondly, it is obvious that if all these "saints' days" were kept as festivals, little work would be done. This was actually the case in papal Italy.

## 28.—FASTING AND ABSTINENCE.

FASTS are solemn festivals, or days of sadness, when we call to mind some loss or some disaster.

Many people deprive themselves of luxuries, and even of proper food, at certain seasons of the year, or on certain days of the week, as the Romanists do on Fridays. The practice of abstaining from meat on one day in the week must be a useful discipline for gross and sensual people, and it may probably be good for all who are not invalids. It is very much to be doubted whether Protestantism has not seriously erred in abolishing the weekly and the yearly fasts. Fasting is less necessary for people who live soberly and plainly than for those whose life is luxurious. Similarly those whose amusements are rational have less need to "mortify" themselves by abstaining from their customary relaxations in Lent or at any other season.

The great Christian yearly fast is called Lent; it lasts forty days, because Christ is supposed to have fasted forty days before his temptation (Matt. iv. 2). This mystic number forty occurs frequently in the Bible: see Gen. vii. 17; Exod. xxiv. 38; Numb. xiii. 25; Sam. xvii. 16; 1 Kings xix. 8; Jonah iii. 4; Deut. xxv. 3. The yearly fast of the Mohammedans is called Ramadan.



## 29.—PRAYER AND ADORATION.

THERE are two kinds of prayer: first, for rain or fair weather, health, wealth, etc.; secondly, for more important things than these.

As regards the first, it is an empty mockery, for it must be obvious, even to a child, that neither storm nor famine nor disease is turned aside by prayer—no, not though all the good men in the world should combine to pray.

Our bishops, priests, and deacons, like the Indian “medicine men,” imagine that they can bring rain after the manner of Elijah on Carmel, by praying for it (1 Kings xviii). But if we were able to produce precipitation by prayer, or to curb the whirling cyclone by hanging a text upon the rigging, like the Arab sailor, or if the little amulet which the Romanist poor wear round their necks could put to flight the microscopic fungus of the cholera, should we not be tempted to neglect all precautions and banish prudence? This is precisely what happens in some Romanist countries—prayer has become a substitute for cleanliness.

Moreover, if we had the power to control the forces of Nature by prayers and charms, it is certain that we should disarrange the seasons and dislocate the universe.

It is natural to most men in illness, danger, or misery, to pray for relief rather than for courage, and it seems strange to the suppliant that no answer breaks the eternal silence. From every corner of this world humanity sends up to heaven its bitter cry, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!” (Matt. xxvi. 46); and why is no answer given? God alone can tell. “Magnum est,” says Thomas à Kempis—“magnum est et valde magnum tam humano quam divino posse carere solatio;” but alas for those who are in this sad case! It is of no avail to seek refuge in the superstitions of our childhood: a rational faith alone can help.

Prayers for worldly benefit will no longer be heard when the minds of men are early trained to the idea that the universe is ruled according to law and order, not by magic and caprice.

“God never jests with us, and will not compromise the end of Nature by permitting any inconsequence in its procession” (Emerson).

“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,  
Uttered, or unexpressed.”

The desires of the soul should be for those things which most concern the soul—purity, patience, peace, and blessings such as these. As regards the things of this world, we must say with Socrates, “may the gods grant us what is best, whether we ask it or no.”

True prayer is either adoration or aspiration, as when we say, “Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done!” (Matt. vi. 9).

“Petitions yet remain which heaven will hear.  
Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,  
Obedient passions, and a will resigned.”

*Johnson*, “Vanity of Human Wishes.”

The sweet incense which they burn in the Romanist churches is a beautiful emblem of prayer (Psalms cxli. 2).

## 30.—REASON AND AUTHORITY.

It may be objected to the last article that the Gospel teaches us to pray for worldly benefits. In many passages Christ urges the very reverse. For instance, in Luke xii. 30, he tells his disciples that "the nations of the world seek after profit and prosperity, but you should despise these things." But it need not concern us in the least whether the New or the Old Testament teaches or does not teach the efficacy of prayer :

"Amicus Christus ; magis amica veritas."

Men who believed in miracles, magic, and sorcery, who thought that visions, dreams, and nightmares were messages from heaven, who imagined that epilepsy and mania were devils which could be driven from one animal into another, and that when an accident happened, the unfortunate victim must have provoked the Deity (Luke xiii. 4 ; John ix. 2)—men in this primitive mental condition might well believe in the efficacy of prayer or in any other irrational doctrine.

We must neither be slaves of the priest, like the Romanist, nor yet of a Bible, like the Protestant,—

"Who bows himself in dust before a book,  
And thinks that the great God is his alone."—*Lowell*.

The reason which God has given us is higher than priest or Bible, and is the ultimate appeal :

"On argument alone our faith is built."—*Young*.

Reason is the "pillar of fire," which leads us as we "wander in the way of the wilderness," which "shows us light, and points out the way in which we should go" (Exod. xiii. 21 ; Nehem. ix.

19). Reason, "logos," is "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John i. 9). For reason is divine (John i.1) ; or, in other words, God is reason, just as much as God is light and truth and love ; and he who obeys reason obeys God :

"What reason bids, God bids."—*Young.*

"The active mind of the century is tending more and more to the two poles,—Rome and reason, the sovereign church or the free soul, authority or personality, God in us or God in our masters" (O. W. Holmes).

Of the "three R's"—Rome, Revelation, Reason—we choose without any hesitation the last, for we know that "revelation" is but another name for bibliolatry ; and as regards "Rome," we must say with Bismarck, "non ibimus Canossam." This is a vital question on which no compromise is possible. If the Bible agrees with reason and common sense, we may quote it, just as we would any other book ; if it is in error, we may contradict it just as freely. The Rev. E. Thring says, in an address on education, "I prefer not quoting the authority of Holy Scripture ; we do not want authority, but common sense." These are the words of Pascal : "La conduite de Dieu est de mettre la religion dans l'esprit par les raisons, et dans le cœur par la grâce." And Fénelon says, "Light must not be sought outside ourselves, but it is to be found within. The light of reason is common to all men in every corner of the universe." "Reason is divine, reason is everywhere, desiring the good, and moving the world" (Aristotle).

*Inscription for a Shrine. From Burns (altered).*

"Thou of an independent mind,  
With soul resolved, with soul resigned ;  
Prepared power's proudest frown to brave,  
Who wilt not be, nor have, a slave ;  
Reason alone who dost revere,  
The Deity alone dost fear ;  
Approach this shrine, and worship here."

## 31.—HERETICS AND SCEPTICS.

“WHATEVER the priest likes not, or understands not,” says Martin Luther, “that is heresy.” Protestantism was a heresy in the sixteenth century, as it is still in the south of Europe; and now, in the nineteenth century, Protestantism, almost worn out, has forgotten its own “heretical” beginnings, and, in its turn, brands all religious progress as “heresy.” Thus it is that those who neglect the passing religious fashion of the hour are often accused of “heresy,” “unorthodoxy,” “latitudinarianism,” and so forth. But we need not be “careful to answer in this matter” (Dan. iii. 16), nor should we hesitate to confess with Paul that “we worship God after a way which some men call heresy” (Acts xxiv. 14), “for we have hope toward God so long as our conscience is clear of offence.”

The fact of being in a small minority cannot possibly affect our salvation, and ought not to disturb our peace. We know that all must sooner or later join our glad chorus of “heuron ameinon!” Why should we not, therefore, pray like Paul, that all men may come to think as we do, and be at the same time more free than we are from the bonds of sin? (Acts xxvi. 29.) This is Christ’s prayer, “Thy kingdom come!”—the kingdom of reason and truth.

A noble answer to the charge of heresy was that made by Rogers, a Protestant martyr of the Reformation. “Thou art a heretic!” said the sheriff. “That will be known,” replied Rogers, “at the last day.” Here was no shuffling and no quibbling (Fox, “Book of Martyrs”).

“Heresy” means “choosing.” It is clear that if we do not choose our own religion, we must hand over the choice to someone else. In this case we are no better off, for “if we believe things only because the pastor says so, or because the Assembly

so determines, the very truth we hold becomes a heresy" (Milton, "Areop").

A devout heretic thus communes with the Deity: "Where should I, weak mortal, infinitely minute manifestation of God's infinite life, where should I obtain the courage, the audacity, to break with the beliefs consecrated by ages, unless it be in the firm faith that God is thus seen to be at once more powerful, more beneficent, and nearer to the heart of man than His most fervent worshippers have ever thought" (Enfantin, "La Vie Éternelle").

The word "sceptic" means a person who looks carefully into things. It is obvious that the more important a matter is, the more closely we should examine it. Now, religion concerns us more deeply than anything else. Therefore it cannot possibly be wrong to be a sceptic. On the contrary, it is the bounden duty of every man to be sceptical in matters of religion. The theologian may prefer the blindfold believer in his doctrines and dogmas, and he may denounce the sceptic and the heretic; but, fortunately, the safety of our souls is not within his power, but in the hands of God.

"Orthodoxy" means holding correct opinions. But the term "orthodox" is generally applied to persons who profess those doctrines which are fashionable in a given time and place. Thus a man who is orthodox in England is heterodox in France, Spain, and Italy, and *vice versa*. He who concerns himself about orthodoxy or unorthodoxy is little likely to arrive at truth, for he commits the sin of looking to man and to man's opinion, rather than to God, the only source of truth. With God there is no such thing as orthodoxy and heterodoxy; but there is truth and falsehood. And the true man is known, not by his creed, but by his acts. The learned and philosophical Dr. Martineau has abundantly proved, if proof were necessary, that salvation does not depend on orthodoxy.



## 32.—SCHISMATICS AND RENEGADES.

“SCHISM” means “dividing” or “separating.” Each religious body considers those who separate from it as “schismatics.” Thus the Romanist brands the Anglican and all other Protestant sects as schismatical, and the Anglican, in his turn, ludicrous as it may seem, applies the same offensive term to all the Protestant dissenters. But we are not concerned with the sense which bigots may attach to the word.

Schism is not invariably wrong, nor yet is it always right. If a man separates himself from a religious body because his convictions are fundamentally different, he performs a sacred duty. On the other hand, if he deserts his co-religionists on account of some trifling divergence of opinion, he commits a sin, and injures the course of truth as far as in him lies. He is not the only schismatic who separates from the popular and fashionable form of religion. There is a meaner and more cowardly schism, which consists in holding aloof from those whose views we really share, because we do not think it prudent to avow our opinions openly. This is a sin for which it is only too easy to find excuses, but, nevertheless, it is the sin which assailed Peter, and caused Judas to lose his soul. It is but Baal worship in a modern form.

After a certain battle in the Thirty Years' War, a captain in the Romanist army, wiping the Protestant blood from his sword, said to a Lutheran prisoner, “I also belong to the reformed religion;” and he spoke in Latin, for fear of detection. This man is the very model of all those schismatics of the baser sort who stand aloof from the sacred cause of religious progress—a typical “renegade” who denies (renegat) or opposes the faith which his conscience and reason tell him to be true.

“Infidel” is another word we often meet in theological books. The word means “unfaithful.” A man is an infidel who, having



known a higher form of faith, becomes, from interested motives, a pervert to a lower one. If all unworthy motives are absent, the man is no infidel ; he is rather to be pitied as one who has lost his way. The Romanist often calls the Protestant an infidel, and the Protestant, with equal absurdity, applies the term to the theist or the Unitarian. But calling a man an infidel does not make him one. No man can be an infidel who is faithful to truth.

## 33.—CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY has many imperfections, some of which are radical, whereas others are corruptions which might be removed ; but, notwithstanding this, we shall do well to deliberate before rejecting it utterly. A homely German saying warns us against "throwing out the baby with the bath water." And is there not the danger that, in getting rid of superstitions, we may lose the idealism which lies hid in them ?

"The judgment which is impatient of what is false has no pleasure in mere rejection ; it wishes rather to discover that which it can embrace and hold fast" (Maurice, "Lessons of Hope," p. 118). The State Church is fast losing its hold on educated people ; "intelligent men refuse to take holy orders, or to attend church" (Rev. H. R. Haweis).

"Verily of the churches it may be said that they are altogether gone out of the way, there is none that speaketh the truth—no, not one" (Rev. T. W. Fowle, rector of Islip). This is not the opinion of prejudiced or hostile outsiders. These are no isolated statements, but the conviction of every thoughtful man. Christianity is "waxing old as doth a garment" (Heb. i. 11), and before long it must pass away, as all other religions have done ; but it is wise not to throw away a threadbare garment until you have obtained a better one.

Christianity has many things in common with the more ancient religions, of which it is the descendant and the heir ; and it is probable that the religion of the future, whatever it may be, will have many things in common with Christianity. In other words, it is not unlikely that there are in Christianity some permanent elements. This is what Channing means when he says : "I am sure that Christianity will endure, but I do not say that what we now call Christianity is to live forever. I think not, I hope not."

Let us not rashly side with the atheists and agnostics, the Sadducees of the nineteenth century; let us rather remain, like Simeon, in the temple, "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Luke ii. 25).

Once again in the world's history "all things are passing away, and all things—politics, education, and religion itself—are becoming new." "Tout s' ébranle, tout se meut, tout prend un nouvel aspect; quelquechose que nous ne savons pas se remue dans le monde; il y a là un travail de Dieu" (Lammenais). As early Judaism stood to the systems of Egypt and Chaldæa, as Christianity stood to later Judaism, as Protestants at the Reformation stood to Romanism, so does the devout pantheist now stand to Protestantism. In each case the new is simple and spiritual, the old complicated and corrupt.

Our choice lies, not, as the priest would have us believe, between superstition and atheism,—a dismal alternative,—but between that form of materialism which he calls "orthodoxy," and the idealism which he has always hated and opposed.

When a religion, however high and noble, ceases to keep pace with progress and enlightenment, it becomes a superstition. A superstition is nothing but a "creed outworn." Robertson ("Star in the East") says, "There are two periods in the history of every superstition; at first it is respectable, deserving reverence, and men believe it, for it is associated with the highest feelings that are in man, and is the channel for God's manifestation to the soul. And there is a later time when it becomes less and less credible, when clearer science is superseding its pretensions. But the priests will not let the old superstition die; they go on, half impostors, half deceived by the strong delusion wherewith they believe their own lie."

Romanism has long since entered on this latter stage. The Council of Trent made all progress impossible. "Popular Catholicism, as it exists in Southern Europe, is as polytheistic and idolatrous as any form of paganism" (E. H. Lecky).

The paganism of Romish Christianity is clearly exposed by Draper in his "Religion and Science," pp. 46-52. This book is

full of valuable information, but the opinions of the author appear to lean towards materialism.

Protestantism is fast following the same course. Christianity itself must soon be classed among the superstitions of the past. But we need feel no sadness at the thought, for the old will not depart until it has fulfilled the divine purpose, and prepared the way for a truer and a better creed. “Une religion qui glisse dans la superstition est une religion qui meurt : une religion qui meurt se remplace par une autre religion” (Krause and Tiberghien).

## 34.—CHURCHES : ROMANISM.

“CHURCH” means “assembly of the Lord.” The Bishop of Rochester has defined a church as “an association for the promotion of righteousness;” and there is no fault to be found with this definition. It follows that a church may be Buddhist or Christian, Trinitarian or Unitarian, Episcopal or Congregational, Romanist or Anglican, theistic or pantheistic ; or it may be named after Wesley, Comte, or Swedenborg. A church may consist of many people or of few. “Wherever two or three are gathered together” (Matt. xviii. 20) for the purpose of religion, there a church exists. A few ragged wretches praying in a garret, or shouting a hymn in an east-end slum, or a handful of naked Syrian fishermen (it is probable that Peter was stark naked when Christ first found him ; see the commentaries on John xxi. 7 and Matt. iv. 18), are as much a church in God’s sight as ten thousand fashionable people with kid gloves and gilt-edged prayer books.

Of Christian churches the oldest and the most corrupt are the Roman and the Greek. The latter has sunk into an Asiatic superstition, and the former is, in many countries, almost equally degraded. The Roman Church pretends to be “catholic” or universal, and to dictate “*urbi et orbi*.”

The Bishop of Rome, who is the head of this Church, claims to exercise authority over all men, and so long as he was able, he enforced his authority with fire and sword. But a church can claim authority over its own members alone, that is over those who accept its doctrines, and over these only with their own consent. This somewhat republican doctrine may be sound or unsound, at any rate it is to be found in Hooker, “*Eccl. Pol.*” i. 10. It matters nothing to the world at large whether the Bishop of Rome has a direct “apostolic succession” from St. Peter or not. We know little and care less about “apostolical succession,” but we do know

that "Romanism is always and everywhere hostile to human progress" (Froude), and we regard with dismay its encroachments upon the once Protestant countries of Europe.

The Anglican Church sometimes puts forward similar pretensions to being "catholic," "apostolic," and so forth. It is particularly absurd for that Church to lay claim to spiritual authority which owes its existence to the fact that Henry VIII. of England repudiated the authority of the Church. The Anglican Church is some fifteen centuries younger than the Roman. It has been well called by Huxley "an emasculated copy of Romanism," for it has lost much of the vigour and vitality of the older and grander religion. And Ruskin reminds us that "every manner of Protestant written services whatsoever are either insolently altered corruptions or washed-out and ground-down rags and *debris* of the great Romanist collects, litanies, and songs of praise."

The glorious Reformation of the sixteenth century, while it saved the world from spiritual bondage, robbed religion of much beauty and poetry, and, therefore, of much truth.

This feeling has prompted a section of the Anglican Church to repudiate the Reformation, and to become Romanist in everything but name. This sickly sacerdotalism will be of short duration, for it is thoroughly un-English. "Our English nation," says Bunyan, "has taken a dislike to the wares of Rome and her merchandise."

The F. D. on our coins testifies that Protestantism at the Reformation, though attacking the Church, claimed and with justice, the title of "Fidei Defensor." So in the nineteenth century, the true defender of the faith is the man who attacks the worst enemies of all faith—*viz.*, formalism and dogma.

It is most natural and reasonable that men who share the same faith should associate themselves together ; and should strive their utmost to help each other and to propagate their views of truth. The light of faith cannot be kept under a cask (Matt. v. 15).

Of such churches the world can never have enough, nor is it possible for their members to be too active and too much in earnest.

“ We must not forget that a church is but a human institution, whereas the family and the State are institutions of Nature and of God ” (Canon Freemantle).

The Greek, the Roman, and the Anglican Churches, like all other human institutions, have their day, and will give place, in a brighter future, to Longfellow’s “ universal church, deep as is the love of God, and ample as the wants of man.”



## 35.—PUBLIC WORSHIP.

EARLY Christian worship was more or less orgiastic. Their "prophesying" was evidently something wilder than our most excited preaching, and their "speaking with tongues" must have been some sort of raving (Acts ii. 3, x. 46, xix. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, xiii. 1, xiv. 2). Then, again, the visions which they saw—chiefly, as we might expect, when the body was exhausted by fasting—were accepted as signs from heaven (Acts x. 10).

Frenzied excitement was not unknown to most ancient forms of worship, but it was especially characteristic of the Southern (Semitic and pre-Semitic) religions. In this respect the worship of our age has altered much. The Northern (Aryan) races are more sober, and Christianity in spreading Northwards has come much under Aryan influence. There are few traces left of this hysterical excitement, unless it be in certain "functions" of the ritualist party, which tends, in this as in other respects, to revert to a lower stage of civilisation.

In another very important respect the worship of these days differs from that of the past. Among Jew and Gentile, Greek and Roman, the gods had to be propitiated by periodical sacrifices. The gods were still angry demons who must be appeased lest they destroy us. This idea still lingers in Romanism, for the central point of their worship is the "sacrifice of the mass," a magical ceremony which is supposed to ward off the wrath of God. There is plenty of occasion still for sacrifice, but we have come to know that it is self-sacrifice which God requires of us.

As early Christianity broke, to a great extent, with the orgiastic worship of the most ancient races; as Protestantism got rid of the pagan superstition of sacrifice, which survived in the "sacrifice of the mass," so the time has come to throw off one more shackle of the past. The dreary and monotonous prayers and supplications

of our liturgies, Anglican and other, must be got rid of, with the anthropomorphic ideas that belong to them. It has long been evident that prayers are not answered in this world, even when uttered by the best of men. It is futile to argue the point. Of course a devout man will feel a shock, for we have been accustomed from our youth up to listen to these melodious litanies, and we have come to like the sound of them, just as the Thibetan enjoys the rattle of his prayer-mill when the wind moves it briskly. We must not forget that each step forward is, and must be, accompanied by a wrench, an uprooting of something which unthinking people regard as vital. A devout Romanist will tell us that, apart from the "sacrifice of the mass," there is no religion possible. This is his point of contact with the Deity. Remove this magical ceremony, and he must fall into atheism. In precisely the same way does the Protestant cling to his prayers, striving to persuade himself, against the evidence of his senses, that there is some mysterious efficacy in the time-honoured formulæ. But how long are we to stultify ourselves and mock the Deity by keeping up a custom which flies in the face of reason? To what purpose are these public prayers? Are we not like a slave who goes on salaaming abjectly when his master has shown him clearly that he does not value his bowing and scraping? "Fervent words spoken in the pulpit or out of it, and in the ordinary language of men, are better than the repetition of official litanies" (Frances Power Cobbe). Let us bear in mind that "work is worship," "laborare est orare." We have here a kind of prayer which can never be ineffectual. Work done for the help and benefit of another is a prayer which the progress of enlightenment can never render obsolete.

There is no fear, or rather there is no danger, that public worship and religion itself will come to an end because this or that superstition is cleared away. When the wild excitement of savage worship disappeared, with its dangerous reaction, religion survived. When sacrifice, with its attendant superstitions, was discarded, religion did not sink. On the contrary, those countries in the south of Europe which rejected this reform can hardly be said to

have any religion. Reform has not killed religion, but the want of reform is destroying both religion and morality.

Let us enquire what remains to us when the orgiastic, the sacrificial, and the anthropomorphic elements depart. First, then, we have aspiration or adoration ; secondly, the æsthetic element ; in the third place, instruction or "edification ;" and lastly, mutual encouragement. As regards aspiration, this naturally expresses itself in poetry and figurative language, in psalms and hymns and anthems. This element admits of infinite development.

The æsthetic element in religion has suffered severely at the hands of Protestants, and much that evangelical Philistinism has done must be reversed. But the ignorant and vulgar prejudice which dissociates beauty from religion is rapidly dying out in England, and is said to be less virulent even in Scotland. We wish to speak with respect of Puritanism, for to the Puritans we owe our religious liberty, but "that is a false Puritanism which consists in the dread or the disdain of beauty" (Ruskin, "Relation of Art to Morals").

In the next matter, "instruction," religious worship has advanced of late. Or, in other words, religion tends to become more intellectual. There is no instruction whatever in a Romanist "office," whereas in a Protestant service the "lessons" are valuable, and might be made more so.

To read out once a week the noble words of the prophets of the past and of the present times must help to keep alive whatever sparks of righteousness exist in a nation. Similarly, that man is ill-advised who goes to his work in the morning without reading for himself and his family some words which may raise the thoughts and prepare him for the duties and trials of the day.

The extinction of sacrifice involves that of sacerdotalism. The priest is a man supposed to hold a special divine licence to perform a certain magical act, called by the Romanist the "sacrifice of the mass." This magical and sacrificial performance is the only *raison d'être* of the priest. When it is discontinued, the sacerdotal office is extinct. Accordingly Protestant Christians have discarded the word "priest," and use some other term. The high church

party alone clings fondly to the name "priest" and to all that it implies.

As a natural result of this change, the conduct of public worship must fall into the control of the laity. In other words, it will become, to a great extent, co-operative. The sacraments and the ceremonies of the future will be so simple and spontaneous that the worshippers themselves will order them. Nor will they lack dignity or beauty. On the contrary, the national religious ceremonies will gain in grandeur and impressiveness when relieved from the narrowing and degrading influences of sacerdotalism.

Nor will the clergyman, when he ceases to play the priest, lose the respect and esteem of the community, which will gladly grant him the place of honour. But he will be specially trained, not in mediæval theology, but rather in the more useful arts of medicine and music.

We see that certain elements tend to disappear from public worship and to be replaced by others. As religion takes a higher form from age to age, so worship, which is the outward expression of religion, must develope and advance. Philosophers may find out, if they can, what is the ultimate goal of human thought in religion and in politics. Even if these enquiries are of any value, we have no concern with them. It is much more important, and it is sufficient for us, to ascertain what is the next step forward.

We must earnestly protest against the idea that a religious service is a kind of complicated theatrical performance to be gone through by the choir and clergyman, while the people look on. This miserable fallacy meets us where we least expect it,—for instance, in an interesting book on "Music and Morals," by Haweis. It were better to remain at home than to be present at any such entertainment. Divine service must be absolutely simple, and it must be conducted by the people themselves, with or without the help of a minister. A complicated ritual is the mainstay of sacerdotalism.

Those who love music will take a direct part in public worship, but all will wish to help in some way.

If works of art were made with lofty purpose, and teaching some noble lesson, it would be the privilege of the rich to adorn with these the buildings used for religious and educational purposes ; for the church and the school of the future will probably be one. Divine service is either a weekly lesson in religion or it is nothing. The better education is understood, the more closely will it be connected with religion, and conversely, as religion is more and more completely purged of superstition, it will be seen more and more clearly to be nothing else than the highest branch of education.

When the litanies are cancelled, there remain such elements as these wherewith to form a weekly service :

1. Hymn.
2. Creed and Commandments.
3. Te Deum, said or sung.
4. Lesson taken from the Calendar, with or without comment.
5. Hymn or Anthem, etc.

The lesson or lessons form the essential part of divine service. They should follow a system throughout the year, rather than depend on the caprice of the minister, as in many Protestant churches. A sermon is unessential. So many hundreds of exhortations are printed, that if a sermon should be desired, a minister will be very ill-advised who devotes any of his time to composing one.



## 36.—ANGLICANISM AND DISSENT.

THE Anglican is the State Church of Britain, but it is not a national Church. First, the great mass of English evangelical Protestants dissent from it,—the Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, and many other important sects. These all protest, and rightly, against the sacerdotalism of the Established Church. The Unitarians, an educated and enlightened body of Christians, repudiate most of the superstitions of “orthodoxy,” and go a long way in the direction of theism.

Next, we must deduct from the numbers of the State Church the numerous and wealthy high church or ritualist party. These are Romanist in all but the name, and must sooner or later join that form of superstition which they admire so much and imitate so closely.

There is yet another important body of Christians who conform outwardly to the Established Church—*viz.*, the broad churchmen, theistic or pantheistic for the most part. These are disliked and barely tolerated by the other parties, and some of them must strain their honesty to its utmost limits when they take part in the public services.

It follows that a small fraction only of the nation really belongs to the State Church. That is to say, the Anglican Church is not national in any true sense of the word.

We may wish to have a national church, but the fact remains that we do not possess one. A national church can exist only where a whole nation agrees on religious questions. This agreement does not now exist. We may hope that at some future time it will be brought about by the progress of enlightenment; but when we simulate a uniformity which is based on indifference or on dishonesty, we cry, “peace! peace!” where there is no peace. “While we affect an external formality, we may fall into a gross

conforming stupidity, which is more to the degenerating of a church than many subdichotomies of petty schisms" (Milton, "Areop").

We can make no greater mistake than to regard the Established Church as a national one, and pay it the respect which would be due to it if it were so. A State Church tending to become more and more sacerdotal, and half committed to Romanism, is a danger and a disgrace to the country. At the same time, whether the Church be truly national, or rejected by two-thirds of the nation, so long as it remains in connection with the State, every citizen is and must be a member of it. His joining a dissenting body does not alter the case. So long as we have a State Church, every Englishman is answerable for its being worthy or unworthy of the nation; just as we are answerable for the efficiency of our army or our schools. Moreover, any Englishman who rises to the position of Prime Minister, whatever be his creed or sect, appoints the chief officers of the State Church. The Church is in England as it ought to be,—a department, the highest department of the State.

Again, the King, not the Archbishop, is the head of our Church; so that the Anglican establishment is in every respect in the power of the nation, and not, like the Roman, in the hands of its own priests and prelates. It may, therefore, and must, be called to account by the nation if it refuses to include all sober and serious Englishmen.



## 37.—THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.

(Gal. vi. 10).

PENDING a second reform of the reformed Christian church, what is the duty of a devout theist or pantheist ?

In the first place he may insure toleration by using a diplomacy which borders on duplicity. He may conceal his opinions, as if he were ashamed of them, instead of openly rejoicing that God has enabled him to see a higher truth than that revealed to others. He may continue to pass himself off before the world as an orthodox person, and to attend public worship, saying all the while in his heart the prayer of Naaman (2 Kings v. 18), "When I bow down in the house of Rimmon, may God forgive me !" But this conduct is not honourable, and perhaps it may not turn out in the end to be a safe course. The Deity may not condone this dishonesty. Who knows whether the prayer of the Syrian captain was heard in heaven.

Of course heretics have an absolute right to an honourable place in the State Church, but if this right cannot be exercised without dishonesty, it were better to waive it.

A government has no more right to exclude any of its citizens from the ministry on account of their opinions than to expel them from the school or from the army. If a man is unfit for one honourable post, he cannot properly be appointed to another. Either let the ministry be thrown open to all Englishmen of good character, or else we must enforce the Schism Act of 1713 against unorthodox schoolmasters, and dismiss all "heretics" from the army, as in 1686.

When the dark days of superstition are past, the inheritance must be ours ; but meanwhile, if the heir ventures into his vine-

yard, the husbandmen catch him and cast him out (Matt. xxi. 39).

Some will say, "Have a little patience, enlightenment is spreading; wait until the State Church becomes more rational." We may perchance wait long for that: "*rusticus expectat!*" The Established Church may continue to fall off in the direction of sacerdotalism until it completely amalgamates with the South European Romanism, as the ten tribes sank into the prevailing Baal worship. If we are not speedily relieved, either by a reform or by disestablishment, the prospect of religion is a gloomy one.

Should the State Church tolerate a man of enlightened opinions, so much the better for the country. But in case he is not tolerated, or in case he can no longer endure the idolatry and superstition which disfigure the public worship, then what course is he to take? Increase the number of existing sects by endeavouring to found a theistic or a pantheistic church? Perhaps not: yet if religion can tolerate three hundred sects, she will not sink under the burden of one more.

If some learned and pious man will lead, it is likely that he will find followers. But in any case, what forbids the forming of an association of Christian pantheists? Shall rational religion be left to take care of itself, while every possible and impossible variety of superstition has an organisation of some sort? "Shall not a body of men acquainted with each other, helping each other to fight, sustaining each other in falls, holding forth to each other the prize of a common victory, be possible once more on earth"? asks Maurice ("*Lessons of Hope*," p. 102).

"Let combination and brotherhood do for the newer and simpler faith what they did once for the old—let them give it a practical shape, a practical grip on human life" (Mrs. H. Ward).

The pantheist looks forward to a church which shall be not merely national, but cosmopolitan. This vision may not be realised in this day or this generation: "we see it, but not now; we behold it, but not nigh" (Numb. xxiv. 17). A provisional association might be formed, if only to prevent the more ignorant of the public from confounding us with the agnostic and the atheist.

Short and simple meetings might be held, absolutely independent of sacred building, clergyman, or minister, and without any absurd affectation of church-going solemnity.

A hymn, a few serious words from any ancient or modern "scripture," appropriate to the season of the year or the events of the day, and an invocation of the Great Spirit ever present everywhere, the whole to last not more than half-an-hour. Thus, entering a protest once a week against superstition on the one hand, and against atheism on the other, we might wait until God is pleased to send us a leader whom we may follow.

The symbols of our most sacred faith should stand in sight, namely those depicted on the cover of this book, or some similar ones. There is nothing puerile in the legitimate use of symbols ; on the contrary, this is a most sensible and practical way of keeping the mind fixed on something which is both abstract and yet intensely real, and of the highest importance. The early Christians drew the mystic outline of the fish on the walls of their cavern-chapels. Was there anything absurd in this? No, it served to remind them of truths which they valued more than life. When a man really believes and grasps a given truth, and stakes his soul upon it, then he will value anything which reminds him of that truth, and he will desire to have the main points of his holy faith kept constantly before his mind, lest he fall off into unbelief or apathy. What other purpose is served by the soldier's flag, the monarch's crown, the fasces of the commonwealth, than that of keeping abstract ideas fixed upon the mind ?

If men are in earnest about religion, they will long to meet with those who think as they do, who share their hopes and fears and aspirations. Where religion exists, this spiritual fellowship, this "communion of saints," will also be found ; and there will be no need for the admonition in Heb. x. 25 about the "assembling of ourselves together."

### 38.—PRIESTS AND PRIESTCRAFT.

"PRIEST" is a shorter form of the Greek word "presbyter," which means "elder," that is, a man of dignity and character. The priest, clergyman, or minister of the present day is a man who maintains certain dogmas and performs certain ceremonies. But this is not his true function. He ought rather to be the teacher of the highest truths, the adviser of those who need advice, and the comforter of the distressed. This is "the pastor after God's own heart, who feeds men with knowledge and understanding" (Jer. iii. 15). Such a priest as has been described by Goldsmith in his "Deserted Village," or by Goethe in his "Hermann and Dorothea," is truly "reverend," and will be respected and esteemed by all right-minded men. "Higher task than that of priesthood has been allotted to no man" (Carlyle, "Sartor").

In a healthy state of society our priesthood will have learning and character. If we insist on subscription to certain dogmas, we restrict the profession to men of limited intellect or elastic conscience, and we degrade the highest office of the State. There are in every country some who are ill-adapted either to fighting or to money-getting. In the Middle Ages such men sought the friendly shelter of a monastery. Here they served society and were useful to humanity by keeping alive the lamp of learning. If we force these men into the arena, both they and we are losers.

In every community the clergy should be the cultivated class, and to this sacred caste should belong, in virtue of their sacred office, the writer, the philosopher, the poet (*sacer vates*), and, above all, the teacher.

Of all the sad developments of materialism in this century, the most accursed is the divorce of education from religion. It is dangerous to separate art and letters from religion; but to exclude

religion from the school is fatal both to education and to religion itself. France drags down the sacred emblems from the walls of her class-rooms, but England has done worse than this, for she has invented the monstrous contradiction of "secular education." England will find out to her cost that education which is not rooted and grounded in religion, and based on some serious principle, is worse a hundred times than ignorance.

The priest is himself to blame for this calamity, for he has abdicated his highest office, in order that he may perform childish antics in a stole (a woman's garment) and chasuble. How true is the saying, "*corruptio optimi pessima* !"

We should expect that from the ranks of the learned class, the priesthood, our men of inspiration, our prophets, would arise. But this is not often the case. Luther was a priest, and Savonarola ; but Christ, the greatest of prophets and reformers, was no priest. On the contrary, he was the enemy and the victim of sacerdotalism.

Priests murdered also the patriot maiden of Domrémy ; and many a thousand of the world's greatest souls have died in agony at their hands. Read, for instance, the cruel death of Giordano Bruno in Draper's "*Conflict of Religion and Science*," ch. vi. Farrar says, "No one who is acquainted with the history of science, and has sufficient honesty to accept facts, can possibly deny that scarcely a single truth of capital importance in science has ever been enunciated without having to struggle for life against the fury of theological dogmatists." The spirit of persecution sleeps, but it is by no means dead. "We should come to the restoration of the inquisition if the propagandists of the Encyclical could have their way" (Goldwin Smith).

It is strange that the priest, to whom humanity should look for help and guidance, should be the bitter foe of the noblest men and women, the friend of every despot, and the relentless opponent of all human progress.

## 39.—PROGRESS.

GOETHE has well said that every nation and every individual must either advance or recede. To remain at rest is impossible, for progress is a condition of existence.

The law of slow, steady development holds not only for the individual man, but also for all human institutions. To arrest the progress of *evolution* in religion or in politics is the surest way to bring about a *revolution*. "There is nothing so revolutionary," says Arnold, "because there is nothing so unnatural and so convulsive to society as the strain to keep things fixed, when all the world is by the very law of its creation in eternal progress. And the causes of all the evils of the world may be traced to that natural but most deadly error of human indolence and corruption, that our business is to preserve and not to improve. It is the ruin of us all alike, individuals, schools, and nations." These words of the great schoolmaster are particularly true of religion, for "if the waters of truth flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition" (Milton, "Areop").

The same law of progress holds good throughout Nature, and affords a clue to the origin of the human race. Darwin should have spoken rather of the "ascent" than of the "descent" of man, for it is probable that man has advanced or ascended through countless ages to his present state. If this be the case, may we not expect to advance still farther, and to ascend still higher? The law of progress is a pledge of immortality.

True progress is at once material, moral, and spiritual. It is, therefore, of no avail to gain deeper knowledge of Nature, to have steam for carrier and lightning for messenger, if we do not at the same time advance to a less artificial code of morals and a more idealistic system of religion. When we would boast of the



“progress of the nineteenth century,” let us inquire with Disraeli, “Progress whence and to what? We talk of progress because by an ingenious application of some scientific acquirements we have established a state of society which mistakes comfort for civilisation.” Mazzini (“Essay on Byron and Goethe”) says: “Our earthly life is one phase of the eternal aspiration of the soul towards progress, which is our law: ascending in increasing power and purity from the finite towards the infinite; from the real towards the ideal; from that which is, towards that which is to come.” These are the words of a noble thinker.

But progress, unless it be the approach to a higher ideal, is but “the tossing of a troubled sea, which cannot rest, and whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” “Be ye therefore perfect” (Matt. v. 48) is the watchword of progress; or, as Goethe expresses the same idea—

“Strebe immer zum Ganzen; kannst du aber kein Ganzes  
Werden, als dienendes Glied schliesse dem Ganzen dich an.”

The spiral may serve as a symbol of progress, and the “Chambered Nautilus,” by Holmes, is a very beautiful psalm of progress. This is the closing verse:

“Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll.  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast;  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life’s unresting sea.”



#### 40.—MORALITY.

MORALITY teaches us to avoid such things as injure our health, or affect our prosperity ; it explains a man's duty to himself.

Morality may be summed up in the stoic formula, "sustine et abstine,"—patient endurance and abstinence (See Socrates, in "Xenophon Mem." iv. 5).

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control :

These three alone lead life to sovereign power."—*Tennyson*.

Morality differs little in all ages of the world and in all countries ; self-control, sobriety, moderation, are things about which there is little dispute. It is the interest of the individual to be moral, and for this reason nothing is commoner than to see men moral who are quite devoid of religion. Thus the philosopher Aristippus was perfectly moral, for he knew how to restrain his passions within the limits of prudence, and to prevent pleasure or anger from interfering with success in life. But he was at the same time absolutely irreligious, for he permitted no higher motives to interfere with his enjoyments. He had perfect self-control, but he laughed at self-denial.

Morality must not be confounded with asceticism. The following passage from Krause and Tiberghien will make clear the difference :

"Les tendances instinctives de l'esprit et du corps sont bonnes et légitimes en elles mêmes, mais il faut qu'elles viennent à leur heure, et qu'elles soient contenues dans leurs justes limites ; n'en méprise aucune, n'en extirpe aucune, ne comprime rien, donne l'essor à toutes tes forces spirituelles et physiques ; mais gouverne-les avec discernement, empêche-les d'usurper les unes sur les autres, maintiens-les en harmonie entre elles,"

A low standard of life is constantly associated with materialism. This is true not only of the vulgar materialism of denial and profanity, but also of the fashionable materialism of form and ritual.

Morality has "the promise of the life that now is" (1 Tim. iv. 8), and it needs no other promise, and no higher sanction. Religion it is which has "the promise of the life which is to come." This explains why in the Hebrew scriptures there is no mention of a future state. The Mosaic system contains little of what we now call religion; it barely rises above morality, and for this reason it does not need to look beyond this life.

## 41.—RELIGION : ALTRUISM.

RELIGION is concerned with the duty of each individual to society : it teaches us to avoid such things as are injurious to other men, and to do many things which are of service to them, even though it may be to our own disadvantage. “La religion est un effort fait sur nous mêmes pour le bien d’autrui, dans l’intention de plaire à Dieu seul” (St. Pierre). In a word religion demands self-sacrifice, and the devotion of the individual for the public good. It is therefore against the interest—that is, the immediate, visible, worldly, and temporal interest—of the individual to be religious. Philosophers have attempted to show that altruism, carried to excess, would result in an impracticable state of things. But this need not concern us. The world has never yet had enough of unselfishness, and is never likely to have enough ; *a fortiori* we can never have too much. *In virtute non est verendum ne quid nimium sit.* It is futile to reason about a state of things which can never occur. It may perhaps be strictly in accordance with what we call the “laws of Nature,” though we cannot prove it, or even see it to be true, that the man who acts as is best for humanity does also what is most to his own advantage. Altruism and the highest self-interest may be one and the same thing, though we know it not.

There can be but one true religion in all times and places, for self-sacrifice is as simple as it is difficult. But there are countless religious systems, commonly called religions.

“ Our little systems have their day ;  
 They have their day, and cease to be ;  
 They are but broken lights of Thee,  
 And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.”—*Tennyson.*

It is true “our little systems have their day,” for they are, and ever must be, imperfect. Yet we may not dispense with them.

Neither religion nor education can exist without system. One

structure after another may crumble away, yet our very nature compels us to construct. System we must have; either some worn-out method of the past, or one more suited to our present wants. But let us beware of those systems which remove all that is irksome from religion, let us avoid those guides who lead along an easy and pleasant path, those prophets who prophesy smooth things, those priests who scatter broadcast "pardons" and "indulgences." Those are false systems and dangerous which take advantage of human weakness, and offer, instead of a strenuous idealism, frequent "services" and such-like things. We are only too prone to fall into the pleasant paths of formalism, to follow the system that is easiest. The whole history of the Jews was a series of such backslidings, and the whole burden of their noble prophets was a protest against such falling off.

It should be the chief office of religion to hold in check that fierce spirit of rivalry which is natural to all animals, including man. The "struggle for existence" goads men to degrade themselves in a hundred ways, and to trample on each other, "*homo homini daemon*." The cruel competition of life makes us forget, or even doubt, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Religion should seek to set at one those who strive, saying, like Moses, "Sirs, ye are brethren!" (Acts vii. 26). Like Duke Theseus in Chaucer's tale, she should persuade the combatants in the lists of life to blunt their spear points. But so far from enforcing the "*trêve de Dieu*," religion herself has too often drawn the sword, and the bitterest wars have been those waged in the very name of religion.

James i. 27 defines religion as benevolence and self-control, thus including morality, for religion presupposes morality. So Aristotle insists upon morality as preliminary to the study of philosophy.

Religion is sometimes defined as a sense of responsibility to God. According to this view, morality will deal with all the relations of life, and religion will supply the sanction and afford the motive for our actions.

It is obvious that this definition of religion will exclude positivism and all other atheistic systems.

## 42.—DEVOTION AND THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

It is natural to ask what motive can induce a man to act against his immediate interest, to devote himself, in fact, for the good of his fellows. The only worthy motive is the love of what is fair and honourable, “*Kalon kai agathon*”: “the beauty of holiness” (Psalm cx. 3) is the loadstone of the soul,—

“For sovereign beauty wins the soul at last.”—*Lowell*.

“Truth, goodness, and beauty,” says Emerson, “are but different faces of the same all.”

“Dieu se manifeste à nous par l’idée du Vrai, par l’idée du Bien, par l’idée du Beau. Ces trois idées sont égales entre elles. Chacune d’elles mène à Dieu, parcequ’elle en vient” (Victor Cousin).

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”

*Keats*, “Ode on a Grecian Urn.”

Christianity has erred in making future rewards and punishments too prominent a motive of virtue, thus reducing religion to a matter of profit and loss. Let us not higggle with the Deity for our penny like the labourers in the parable (Matt. xx.).

“*Oderunt peccare boni virtutis amore.*”

“Pleasure,” says Seneca, “is neither the cause of virtue nor the reward, but the result.”

The question remains,—What actions are beautiful, and what are the reverse? We have no authoritative code of right and wrong, and can never have one. The early Christians were urged to

abstain from the faults to which the Southern temperament is most liable—*viz.*, superstition and sensuality (Acts xv. 29) ; the rest was left to their own conscience. Paul makes no attempt to define “ what things are lovely and of good report ” (Phil. iv. 8).

It is notorious that the Old Testament contains no philosophy, and that which we find in the New Testament is of small importance, and does not come from Christ. The noblest lives have not been ruled by abstract theories, nor have the greatest thinkers always set us the best example : Seneca, for example, and Bacon. Christianity, which rules the world, is not based on any definite logical system. It consists essentially in the imitation of an ideal character, who was himself governed by no philosophy whatever, but by two great hypotheses,—vital truths, as we believe, but truths which lie beyond the reach of all logic and argument, truths which men will accept or reject according to the constitution of their minds, but about which it is idle to dispute. “ Si l'on vent combattre ou défendre avec des raisonnements des choses qui surpassent la lumière de la raison humaine, c'est ce qui n'est pas possible ” (St. Pierre). If we leave metaphysics to those who have a taste for it, we shall be, in all that concerns religion, no worse off than Christ himself.

The man of science may object that it is irrational to build on a hypothesis. But we may remind him that the “ molecule,” which lies at the foundation of physics, is admitted to be an unthinkable hypothesis.

## 43.—SACRIFICE.

THERE are three stages of sacrifice, corresponding to three distinct ideas of God : first, an offering of blood to a cruel demon ; secondly, a peace-offering to propitiate a God who is good and bad by turns, capricious and dangerous like an Eastern despot ; thirdly, self-sacrifice to the will of a beneficent Deity.

The god of the earliest races was, like that of many savages, a vindictive fiend, who delights in blood, as do his worshippers. The legend in Genesis iv. tells us that the primitive deity adored by these primeval men would not accept the "fruits of the ground." Like those ghosts in the "*Odyssey*" (Bk. xi. 36), he loved the taste of blood. There are traces of this early demon-worship in the history of most races. In Genesis xxii. we see the point in Hebrew history, where higher ideas of Deity began to prevail, and the conscience revolted against offering children to demons. Jephthah (Judges xi. 31), a low-born man, as we are informed, fell back into the barbarous custom, and burned his own daughter.

But the Hebrew poets taught the people to abhor the cruelty of the neighbouring nations, who "sacrificed their children to devils, and shed innocent blood" (Psalms cvi. 37 ; and see 2 Kings iii. 27). One bard was bold enough to protest against even the sacrifice of animals. Speaking in the name of his God, he utters these remarkable words, which must have been the very wildest "heresy" in those days, when the whole world believed in bloody sacrifices : "Shall I eat the flesh of bulls, and drink the blood of goats ? If I were hungry, I would not tell thee ; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. I will take no bullock out of thy herds, nor he goat out of thy folds, for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. Offer unto Javeh thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High" (Psalm l.).



The Romans abandoned human sacrifices at the early period of their history which is represented by the reign of Numa. Ovid tells us how the witty king cajoled his god into eating fish and onions instead of flesh and blood. At the time of the Trojan War the Hellenes had not yet outgrown this early stage of civilisation. Iphigenia must perish before the ships can sail.

Long after the Aryan and Semitic races had ceased to offer human sacrifices, the "vile race of Ham," and those Semites who adopted their religion, thought to gain the favour of their demon gods by thrusting their children into the fire. In the last Punic War the Carthagenians were guilty of this crime.

As a man's character is, so is his idea of God. A merciless man will imagine a God like himself: "*Le juste ciel envoie aux âmes cruelles des religions effroyables*" (St. Pierre). Seneca ("*De Vita Beata*") says that a low conception of the Deity causes men to sin without shame. Thus the Hebrew Javeh was at one time cruel and inexorable, at another time favourable, to his worshippers. We find accordingly that the Hebrews could practice revolting cruelties on their captives when not restrained by their prophets (compare 2 Kings, vi. 21, and 1 Chron. xx. 3). What, then, must have been the barbarity of those nations whose gods delighted in gore!

Many ancient nations supplied their gods with blood by offering up all strangers who fell into their hands. The Tauri of the Crimea did this, and Busiris, King of Egypt, as the legend goes. The Minotaur of Crete was probably a huge idol which received a yearly tribute of human victims from conquered countries.

This delight in blood lingers to this day both in the character and in the religion of less refined people. The picturesque oath, "by Our Lady" (that is the B.V.M.), has been corrupted into the universal adjective "bloody," which often means choice or pleasant. And blood is the staple subject of the evangelical hymns.

Not without reason did Coleridge speak of the "raw head and bloody bones of popular theology."

In the second stage of civilisation a peace-offering to a despot

took the place of a sanguinary sacrifice to a demon. The offering was either an animal or some produce of the field. Animals, of course, were the money of ancient times (*pecus, pecunia*). This idea of bribing the gods was universal. The Greek proverb says "the gods are gained over by gifts" (*dōra theous peitheî*). But the gift must be of value to the giver (1 Chron. xxi. 24).

This view of sacrifice, though anthropomorphic, is far higher than the former one, for it does not necessarily involve bloodshed. The priest naturally does all he can to propagate this idea, because the offerings made to the gods are his perquisite, and form the main source of his revenue.

The third and highest view of sacrifice is based on the belief that the Deity is just and merciful, that He does not delight in blood, and cannot be bribed, and that the way to please Him is to keep His law—

"For we are filled,  
Who live to-day, with a more perfect sense  
Of the great love of God than those of old,  
Who, groping in the dawn of knowledge, saw  
Only dark shadows of the unknown."

*L. Morris, "Epic of Hades."*

With Christianity this nobler ideal of a spiritual sacrifice (1 Peter ii. 5), prevailed; but it was not altogether strange to the Hebrews, as we may see by such texts as these: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (see 1 Sam. xv. 22; so Psalm li. 17; Prov. xxi. 3, etc.).

## 44.—ATONEMENT.

THE doctrine of the "Atonement" is a strange distortion of an eternal truth. When this doctrine is put before us in its most degraded form, we have a feeling of surprise and horror. How can any man believe in and worship a fiend who slays his own son to satisfy his fury against a set of miserable mortals? This is certainly a relic of demon-worship, a survival of the earliest and lowest stage of religion, when a bloody sacrifice was thought acceptable to God.

The more cultivated Christian writers explain away the Atonement, so as to make it less revolting. But the doctrine does not stand by itself; it depends on the theory of sacrifice. To each of the three views of sacrifice there is a corresponding view of the Atonement.

Firstly, the primitive god, who is a vampire, must have the blood of his own son. Christ is the "scapegoat" (Levit. xvi. 20). This is the "vicarious sacrifice" theory—a doctrine which might shock even a savage, and which is irrational as it is shocking; for suffering is not merely the punishment of sin, it is also the consequence. We can imagine a punishment being transferred from a guilty person to an innocent one, however unjust such a thing would be, but a consequence cannot be transferred. If a man eats sour grapes, his own teeth, not his neighbour's, are set on edge (Ezek. xviii. 2-4, 20-23, etc.). Secondly, the higher gods of the nobler races are less sanguinary, yet they are more to be feared than loved; they are liable to fits of anger, and must be propitiated by costly offerings. To persons in this stage of thought, Christ is a "peace-offering" to an offended Deity.

But there is a third and still higher view of Deity—*viz.*, that He is merciful, and "desires not the death of a sinner," much less that of an innocent substitute for the offending wretch. This

theory teaches that God and man are not at variance, and that, consequently; no "at-one-ment" is needed excepting repentance and amendment of life. No peace-offering or propitiation is required of us but obedience and resignation.

Sacrifice remains, not of cattle or of chattels, but of self—the hardest sacrifice of all.

In this sense Christ and Socrates and a hundred thousand others offered themselves as a willing sacrifice, not to appease an angry God, but to reform and raise a corrupt society.

All human progress is based on sacrifice. This is the truth which underlies the dark delusion of the Atonement. Every step of political and religious progress has been won by sacrifice. Some Winkelried has thrown himself upon the spear points that his comrades might pass through the gap. The ancients were convinced that "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Heb. ix. 22), and they were but attempting to express in a dim and barbarous fashion the eternal truth that without suffering there is no higher life. So, again, when evangelical Christians say, "Christ died for me," they are stating an absolute truth in an imperfect and grotesque manner. John the Baptist, Christ, and Paul, the three founders of Christianity, all lived and died for humanity, and therefore for us. And it is equally true that Marcus Aurelius lived for us, that Socrates died for us, that Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer were burnt for us, our own parents taught us and toiled for us. Therefore, to all these benefactors be equal honour, and for each of them be equal thanks to God!

## 45.—HEAVEN AND HELL.

HEAVEN was to the ancients the snowy heights of Mount Olympus, between Thessaly and Greece ; or the "*beatæ insulæ*," the happy islands in the distant West. Here was the concourse of the blessed, "*amoena piorum concilia*."

The Teutonic word "heaven" means the sky, which is "heaved" up above us. "Hell" implied, like "*hades*," the "unseen," something covered or hidden. It did not originally imply a place of punishment. Tartarus was an abode of torment, the home of the furies, guarded by the three-headed Cerberus, and surrounded by the burning streams of Phlegethon.

Between these two the Romanists are taught to believe in an intermediate state, called "purgatory"—that is, the "place of cleansing"—where those not wholly bad will suffer until they have expiated their sins. This, like all our ideas about the details of the future state, is a pure speculation. We do not know, and can never know, whether it is true or false. But we do know that the priest has turned the doctrine of purgatory to his own account, for he blasphemously claims the power of freeing the souls of the departed from this place of torment, and receives large sums from his poor credulous dupes for performing this magical operation.

We need not discuss "the corrosive doctrine of an eternal hell" (F. P. Cobbe), for even the more ignorant Calvinists are beginning to take less delight in brimstone and sulphur. "Hell-fire," says Rev. Ch. Voysey, "is going out for want of stirring." No man knows anything whatever about heaven or hell. But it is extremely probable that, as morality has its reward immediately, and also its penalty, so the reward, or rather the result, of religion will be reaped in some future phase of existence. Otherwise, Christ and all those who have done most for humanity have made a

fatal mistake. "For it is absurd to say that a life of self-denial and endurance, ending in martyrdom, is happiness, unless there is compensation beyond" (Goldwin Smith). When we speak of "wicked people being sent to hell" (Psalm ix. 17), we mean that crimes unpunished here will meet with retribution hereafter. As the "wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23), persistence in sin, or that utter indifference to everything ideal which the Bible calls "forgetting God," may possibly lead to annihilation. *Dii meliora!* For absolute badness is absolute death. Possibly men are as much unable to attain to absolute badness as to absolute goodness.

Coleridge says that "hell is but truth found out too late;" that is to say, hell is remorse for an evil or a wasted life. No fire or flames are needed. Conscience can wield the lash of the Eumenides. "Who can endure an evil conscience?" (Prov. xviii. 14, correct translation). But it avails nothing to speculate about things which we can never know. Each man has enough to do to save himself, with God's help, from the "hell" which waits on misspent time and wasted opportunities.



## 46.—DEVILS AND DEMONS.

THE "devil" is an impersonation of evil : and as evil is negative, or the absence of good, it follows that the devil is the impersonation of nothing. In other words, there is no devil, nor can be. "The devil is the negation and opposite of God. Whereas God is 'I am' (Ex. iii. 14), or positive Being; the devil 'is not'" (Maitland). "Good is positive, evil is merely negative, not absolute; it is like cold, which is merely the privation of heat. All evil is so much death or nonentity" (Emerson).

Whenever anything goes wrong, within us or without, uneducated people use "the devil" as a scapegoat. Christ and his countrymen supposed that diseases were caused by devils (Matt. ix. 32; xii. 22; xvii. 18; Mark vii. 25, etc.). Mary Magdalene was afflicted with seven devils, and a whole army of devils dwelt in another unfortunate person (Mark v. 9). So if the weather or the crops go wrong, the devil must be at the bottom of it. The German farmers have a "*Kartoffel-teufel*," a solanaceous devil, who causes potatoes to rot! (Gubernatis, "*Mythologie des Plantes*"). This demon cannot be older than the days of Raleigh and Parmen-tier, unless he came across the Atlantic with the tuber.

The downward tendency in human nature, "original sin," is quite enough to account for our own personal shortcomings, and for the crimes of humanity. Devil means "accuser;" but our own hearts accuse us quite sufficiently, so long as the conscience is not "seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. iv. 2).

The belief in devils is a mark of the earliest and lowest stage of civilisation. Savages who have no God, and no word even for "good," worship one or more devils. But as religion becomes more ideal, the devils disappear. In the Middle Ages the devil had already dwindled into a burlesque bogle, with horus and hoofs and tail, who played amusing pranks, and was very much



afraid of holy water. Dunstan actually seized him by the nose or by the tail ! In country districts, where the imagination has free play, and education has not yet called out the reasoning powers, the peasant sees as many bogles as Tam o' Shanter did in "Alloways auld haunted kirk." Every wild and gloomy spot is peopled with devils, ghosts, fairies, elves, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, wraiths, apparitions, dragons, giants, and dwarfs. Many, if not all, of these are the deposed gods of ancient religions. When a lower form of faith is superseded by a higher, its deities are transformed into demons. The new ideas take their rise in towns and in centres of mental activity. The dwellers in outlying districts, the distant villagers or "pagans," are the last to adopt the religious innovation. As the Scotch and Irish fought with ill-placed loyalty for the worthless Stuarts, so do country-folk everywhere cling to exploded ideas. Thus it happens that the gods of bygone creeds linger on as elves and fairies, or become degraded step by step, until they take their last stand at the corner of some field as a Priapus or a scarecrow. Signs are not wanting that the minor deities of Christianity will share this fate ; and it is ominous that the word "Christian" has already given rise to "crétin." Those who make a virtue of credulity are, in fact, within a measurable distance of absolute imbecility.

The man who puts his trust in God need not trouble himself about devils. But the word "devil" represents a very real inward, though not an outward, danger. To different individuals, and at different times of life, "the devil" takes different forms. Now he is a satyr ; now the spirit of doubt and denial in Goethe's "Faust," who drives us to despair of this world and the next. Again, he is the "father of lies" (John viii. 44), and patron of all dishonesty and Jesuitry ; and anon he comes before us disguised as an "angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14), strictly respectable and orthodox—no shaggy legs and pointed ears—urging a cowardly conformity to anything and everything established, and pointing out the dangers and disadvantages of being in a minority.

The symbol of the devil or Satan (Shaitan), or Baal-Zebub, god

of flies, is a serpent (Gen. iii.), which represents evil, wrong, and the powers of darkness. This serpent is the Egyptian typhon slain by Isis, the Greek python killed by Apollo, the hydra by Heracles, the dragon by St. George, and so on. In all these legends we see the same glorious hope that humanity will at last overcome evil, or as it is poetically stated in Genesis iii. 14, the descendants of Eve shall bruise the serpent's head.

## 47.—REVELATION : GOSPEL : TESTAMENT.

WHEN a man of great earnestness and insight puts before his fellows an ideal which they are too dull or too self-interested to perceive for themselves, this is to them a revelation, or “unveiling” of hidden truth, which they must either accept to their “salvation,” or reject at their peril.

The words of every teacher of righteousness—Socrates or Christ or Epictetus—are to those who hear them a “gospel,” “good spell, eu-angel, or good tidings (Luke ii. 10). And the written or recorded words of such a man are the “testament” or “legacy” which he bequeaths to mankind. A new ideal must appeal both to the emotions and to the intellect. In other words, “salvation” is a matter of both head and heart. A revelation which appeals only to the emotions may degenerate into the hysterical excitement of the salii or the dancing dervishes, or the grotesque performances of the “salvation army.”

On the other hand, a revelation which appeals solely to the reason loses itself in metaphysical subtleties, and takes no hold upon the hearts of men. The “orthodox” idea of a revelation is that certain individuals in the distant past were exclusively inspired by some deity to expound to men certain complicated doctrines. This is an utterly false and mischievous view. The fact is, that just as God, the great Spirit of the universe, gave to man the power of speech, but left him to frame language for himself (Farrar, “Origin of Language”), so the Deity has bestowed upon us reason and common sense, and leaves us to answer for ourselves Pilate’s question, “What is truth?” (John xviii. 38.) Shall we grant to the Hebrew writers a monopoly of inspiration, and suppose that revelation came to an abrupt end eighteen hundred years ago? This would be to thrust religion into the past, and to cut off our communication with heaven. It is, as Lowell says, to

translate Javeh by "I was," instead of by "I am." Either there is revelation now, or there never was any. Emerson says, "Men have come to speak of revelation as something long ago given and done, as if God spoke no longer to the heart of man." So Theodore Parker ("Discourse" ii. 7), "Men know that there is a God, and a distinction between right and wrong, by hearsay, just as they know that there was a flood in the time of Noah or Deucalion."

Some think to attain to a certainty of truth by taking certain ancient books and calling them infallible. But by so doing they gain nothing and lose much, for the certainty they crave is as far away as ever. And by repudiating reason which God has given us as a guide, they lose themselves in the labyrinths of superstition.

It has often been said that an infallible book, if such an absurd thing existed, would need an infallible interpreter. Thus the Pope of Rome is perfectly logical when he proclaims himself infallible. And those Protestants who refuse to complete the Reformation by discarding the last rags of superstition, will find themselves compelled to reverse the Reformation, and accept again the authority of Rome.

Bibliolatry is the cardinal vice of Geneva, as sacerdotalism is that of Rome. Assuredly the latter is more dangerous and more degrading than the former. But that man is as much a slave who pins his faith to a book as the other whose conscience is kept by a priest. And he is an idolater to boot, as Lowell says—

" Who with his idol volume's covers two  
Would make a jail to coop the living God ;  
Thinking the cisterns of those Hebrew brains  
Drew dry the springs of the All-Knower's thought."

The Bible becomes to the evangelical Christian a kind of magical book, like the "grimoire" of the Middle Ages, in which he can, by a little ingenuity, find any theory and almost any fact.

## 48.—BELIEF : CREEDS.

WE often hear it said that it matters little what we believe. But it is of vast importance to a man what faith he holds, and it were better "to have a millstone hung round the neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" than to forsake a higher faith for a lower.

Yet there is no merit whatever in believing, and no blame in disbelieving any given doctrine. Belief or unbelief *per se* is nothing ; but in so far as it affects character and conduct it is all-important. But there is great blame and much danger in shutting our eyes to a truth, or in rejecting a doctrine, because we find it irksome or against our interest. And there is equal blame and danger in holding a dogma because we were brought up to it, or because it happens to be popular and fashionable, or out of respect for authority. "*Sine ratione non valet auctoritas.*"

To adhere blindly to what is called "orthodoxy" is every whit as dangerous as to rush blindly into what is called "heresy." "*Quid est enim temeritate fœdus, aut quid tam temerarium tamque indignum sapientis gravitate atque constantia quam aut falsum sentire, aut quod non satis explore perceptum sit et cognitum sine ulla dubitatione defendere?*" (Cicero, "*De Natura Deorum*"). What is more objectionable than hasty and ill-considered action? And what is more rash, more unworthy of a thoughtful and serious person, than either to embrace opinions which are false, or, on the other hand, to adhere blindly to doctrines which stand on no firm foundation? (free translation). Maurice says ("*Lessons of Hope*"), "We cannot believe words, however habitual and familiar they are to us, if there is that in them which contradicts the spirit of a man that is in us." And, again, the same author writes : "We are not dependent for our faith upon the testimony of

apostles, upon the traditions of past ages, upon the authority and interpretation of doctors and churches."

And, again, "We stand not upon traditions, or upon men, or by men, though these men were apostles and prophets; but we stand upon their foundation, believing that the spirit in which they spoke is given to us, to make us true men, to make us understand true words, and to make us speak true words ourselves, and that this spirit of truth will bind together all kindreds and nations and tongues." Let this be our prayer:

" If I am right, thy grace impart  
Still in the right to stay;  
If I am wrong, O teach my heart  
To find a better way!"—*Pope.*

Creeds are not essential to religion. The deepest faith is commonly in those who have the shortest and the simplest creed. Christ's creed, and that of the earliest Christians, may be summed up in two words: "*God, Immortality.*" The first formal creed, the so-called "Apostles'," is the shortest. The next, the "Nicene," is longer and more irrational. Then as faith grew weaker, and religion became more corrupt, the creeds grew longer, until at last the monstrous "Athanasian" creed was begotten by superstition on materialism!

49.—TRUTH.

IT is our duty to “prove all things, and to hold fast that only which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). Had men not obeyed this injunction, Christianity would never have spread beyond the borders of Palestine.

Our greatest safeguard against error is to cherish that “spirit which searches all things, yea the deep things of God” (1 Cor. ii. 10). Guided by this spirit we shall refuse “profane and old wives’ fables” (1 Tim. iv. 7), and we shall be ready to give a “reason for the hope that is in us” (1 Peter iii. 15).

Courage to avow the truths which we discern is more needed than acuteness in detecting falsehood and error.

Truth is like the manna of old (Exod. xvi. 18), we can obtain and keep only as much as we require ourselves. If we seek truth for any other motive than as a guide to right conduct, our search will be in vain. “*Omnia philosophiæ præcepta sunt ad vitam referenda.*”

“Fair truth,  
Friend to the wise, supporter to the weak,  
From thee we learn whate’er is right and just.  
Creeds to reject, professions to distrust,  
Forms to despise, pretensions to deride,  
And, following thee, to follow naught beside.”—*Crabbe.*



## 50.—DUALITY.

THE solar hero is beneficent to the righteous only; he bears good-will to those only who have good-will (Luke ii. 14, another reading).

His power is great, and it is twofold, for the ancients clothed their heroes with many of the attributes of Deity.

First, as God himself is love (1 John iv. 8), and as the sun, which is the symbol of God, warms and brings to life, so the solar hero is beneficent: he heals the sick in spirit, he raises the spiritually dead, that is to say, he rouses the conscience of those whose souls are dead.

Thus Christ, as the legend runs, brings Lazarus to life out of friendship for Mary and Martha (John ix.), and Heracles rescues from the power of Pluto the devoted wife of his friend Admetos. Secondly, as the sun scorches and kills, so the solar hero strikes and destroys; and his weapon never fails to slay (Isaiah xliii. 13).

This unerring weapon is the hammer of Thor, the arrow of Paris, of Tell, etc.

The destroying power of the solar hero is felt only by the evil and by those who resist the right, and it is attributed to the heroes of antiquity, because it resides in the Deity, who is to all evil "a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29). Shaddai, the destroyer, is one of the Hebrew names of God.

"A God all mercy is a God unjust."—*Young*.

In like manner the solar hero—who is, as all should be in their degree, an "imitator of God" (Eph. v. 1)—must wield this power as far as in him lies. It is just as much the duty of a good man to attack evil as to sustain the right.

In Luke xiii. 6 the barren fig-tree is blasted with a word. On

one other occasion only was this destroying power attributed to Christ ; but we are warned not to incur the wrath of the "lamb" (Rev. vi. 16), and we are clearly given to understand that he who is "mighty to save" the righteous (Isaiah lxiii. 1) is also mighty to punish and to destroy the evil and impenitent.

This double aspect of Deity was known to the Greeks, and is well seen in Apollo and in Artemis.

The Persians even went as far as to imagine a dual government of the world. Their good deity Ormuzd, the "powerful and beneficent," was opposed to Ahriman, who strove against him, as the giants and Titans against Zeus. I have shown in the chapter on devils and demons that evil is merely negative. Therefore the Persian Ahriman, like the Hebrew Satan and the Christian devil, can have no objective existence.

## 51.—TRINITIES AND TRIADS.

It is not necessary for our usefulness in life, or for our happiness here or hereafter, that we should think correctly, or that we should even think at all about this question.

“Cave de istis curiose tractare quæ tuam scientiam excedunt, sed hoc magis satage et intende ut vel minimus in regno Dei queas inveniri” (“Imitatio”: so Socrates in “Xenophon Mem.” i. 1-10).

By gaining some acquaintance with natural science we shall spend our time more profitably than by reasoning about the nature and attributes of the Deity. The serious and reverent student of Nature knows more about God than the theologian, for he has learnt something of the manner in which God has worked and still works in the universe.

The Athanasian Creed, with its fourscore irrational statements, we may dismiss as a sad monument of human folly and presumption. But we may venture in all humility to assert with the Jews and Arabs, and with the deepest philosophers of other nations, that God is one. And the conclusions of modern science point to a mysterious unity in Nature, a oneness underlying the infinite diversity that meets the eye.

Secondly, we must believe that the Deity has a twofold aspect, as was shown in chapter 50; or, in other words, that God may be regarded as a duality. F. Power Cobbe rightly addresses the Deity as “Father and Mother of mankind.”

Lastly, God has to man a threefold aspect, and may be regarded as a trinity or triad.

This is why the Christian prays, “in nomine Patris et Filii, et Spiritus sancti.”

“Pater,” God the Father and Mother, is the great Spirit dimly revealed in Nature: the Deity, “whom no man hath seen at any

time" (John i. 18) or discovered by the light of reason, or by any other eye than that of faith.

"Filius," the son, is humanity, toiling and suffering; represented at its best in such characters as Socrates or Christ, the "son of man," that is, the ideal man, and in "the little children," the unworldly ones whom he loved so well. God is truly said to be revealed to man through humanity, for by the service of humanity alone is it possible to attain to the knowledge of God.

"Spiritus sanctus," conscience, common to heathen, Christian, Turk, and Jew, highly developed in some men, rudimentary in others (like the legs in a whale), but never altogether absent. This is "God the Holy Spirit," the divine monitor, the inward voice, to stifle which is the "sin unto (spiritual) death" (1 John iv. 16), the blasphemy for which there is no forgiveness (Matt. xii. 31), for "God's spirit will not always strive with man."

These are the "three persons" of the Christian trinity or triad, and if rightly understood they form no idle dogma, for they represent to us faithfully the three aspects under which the one God is revealed to man.

The Christian may not be aware of the esoteric meaning of his cherished doctrine, just as the later Greek was ignorant of the fact that Hermēs represented the wind, and so forth. For the bigot hugs his dogma long after the life is out of it, just as the Indian mother carries about the corpse of her infant.

In various places on the Continent there are statues of the Virgin Mary which "came down from heaven," as the poor ignorant people believe, like the Roman ancilla, or the image of Diana at Ephesus (Acts xix. 35).

However bad the workmanship, however vile the taste and tawdry the ornamentation, the thing is worshipped and adored.

Just so is it with the dogmas of an established cult: no distortion, however hideous, will interfere with the fond devotion of the multitude, so long as they remain under the delusion that a given doctrine is divine.

The mystic theories of a duality and of a trinity, are by no means peculiar to Christianity. They were known to the earlier

religious systems of India, Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt. Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva formed the Hindu triad ; Osiris, Isis, and Horus were the "three persons" of an Egyptian trinity.

On this point it would appear that men of different races have arrived at similar conclusions.

## 52.—NATURAL RELIGION.

A NATURAL religion is one from which all that is unnatural and artificial has been purged away. “*La religion naturelle n’a pas les imperfections des cultes établies ; elle est la religion idéale, sans vices ni erreurs, absolument conforme à la raison*” (Krause and Tiberghien, “*La Vie Morale*”).

As a natural classification of plants or of animals has been but lately attempted, and can be attained only by much study and by slow degrees, so also a truly natural religion will be the growth of time.

Moreover, as the student of natural science, failing a perfect classification, or a complete theory, makes use in the meantime of the best which he can find, so we shall do well to adopt provisionally that religious system which has least superstition, and which comes nearest to the ideal at which we aim.

Natural religion is founded on natural science, that is to say, it is based upon the study of Nature, and in this respect it differs from so-called orthodoxy, which is frequently at variance with the facts of science.

Natural religion, though it refuses to be enslaved by the traditions of the past, regards with respect and reverence the teachings of the wise and good men of old. And in this respect it stands aloof from the evil company of those who scoff at all things sacred, and fall victims to strange disorders of the mind, as those men of Bethel who were torn by she-bears from the wood (2 Kings ii. 23).

## 53.—IDEALISM.

IDEALISM is rather an attitude of the mind than a definite philosophical system. That man is an idealist who places above all things beauty, honesty, truth, and whatever is akin to these. Christ was one of the greatest of idealists, and for this reason one of the greatest religious teachers. “Ce qui distingue, en effet, Jésus des agitateurs de son temps et de ceux de tous les siècles, c’est son parfait idéalisme” (Renan).

The idealist compares every system and every institution with a pattern of perfection which does not exist on earth, and he endeavours rather to raise others to his ideal than to conform himself to theirs (Romans xii. 2). For he thinks it the duty of all men “to set the crooked straight,” nor to rest satisfied with anything that can be made more perfect. Thus, idealism is the parent of progress, and every step forward taken by humanity is due to the efforts of men who have striven for an ideal.

In his beautiful essay on idealism Emerson has these words: “Idealism sees the world in God [an expression which occurs in Malebranche]. It beholds the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, as one vast picture which God paints on the instant eternity for the contemplation of the soul.”

It has been said that “the mind is the measure of a man.” But the measure of the mind itself is its capacity for idealism. So also the greatness of a nation depends neither upon commercial prosperity, nor yet on extended empire, but rather on the ideal which animates the mass of the people. “Power,” says Disraeli, “is neither the sword nor shield, for these pass away, but ideas, which are divine.”



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“ The visible and present are for brutes :  
A slender portion, and a narrow bound.”—*Young*.

“L'idéal subsiste à nos yeux comme un phare pour la vie éternelle” (Krause and Tiberghien).

Robertson (“Purity”) says, “The visible world presents a different aspect to the idealist and to the materialist; the one fixes his attention on what is beautiful, the other sees merely what is useful. Whence comes this difference? From the soul or the want of soul within us.

We can make of this world a vast chaos, a mighty maze without a plan, a mere machine, a collection of blind forces, or we can make it the living vesture of God.”

## 54.—MATERIALISM.

MATERIALISM needs no accurate definition. "It is the negation of idealism, and is to it what darkness is to light, non-entity to existence, the 'devil' to God. And in proportion to the degree of its acceptance by man, it ministers to his deterioration and destruction here and hereafter" (E. Maitland, "The Perfect Way." The word "idealism" is substituted for "spiritualism"). The materialist sees only the lower aspect of every question; he prefers compromise to conscience, expediency to principle, and his own interest to all else. Whatever his profession,—religion, education, law, or medicine,—he will oppose reform or progress, for it is his instinct to swim with the stream, to follow the multitude, and to seek his own safety.

The materialist will either hold aloof from all religion, as a matter which concerns only weak-minded people, or more frequently he will make a traffic of it and set up his tables in the temple (Matt. xxi. 12).

Materialism is more commonly associated with the strictest "orthodoxy" than with the theories of Darwin or of Haeckel.

The materialist would fain "live by bread alone" (Matt. iv. 4), nor does he thirst for the "water of life" To him these mystic words are void of meaning, for he lacks the faculty by which spiritual things are discerned (1 Cor. ii. 14). He has, in Carlyle's words, "no sense for the high nor for the deep, nor for aught human or divine."

The materialist denies that "there is more in man than the mere breath of his body" (Darwin, "Journal"). "Dust thou art, to dust returnest" sums up for the materialist the nature and the destiny of humanity. The brotherhood of man is to him an idle dream, the fatherhood of God a vain delusion.

The arguments of materialism are ably refuted by Professor

Momerie, a broad churchman of acute intellect and immense learning. His sermons must be read by all who wish to build their faith upon a solid foundation.

There are many phases of materialism. It is a many-headed monster, *bellua multorum capitum*. Religious materialism trusts to the efficacy of forms and ceremonies, and bows to the authority of book or bishop. It exalts the "letter which kills" against "the spirit which gives life" (2 Cor. iii. 6). Medical materialism tortures helpless animals, and thinks to promote health by inoculating with the virus of disease. The manifold materialism of education is only too well known to those who are connected with that profession. The trail of the serpent of materialism is on every calling. The prince of the power of darkness holds all the gates. Let not the young man imagine that he can enter without a struggle into the region of the ideal:

" Nur ein Wunder kann dich tragen  
In das schone Wunderland."—*Schiller*,

## 55.—THEISM.

THEISM or deism is belief in God. There is no essential difference between the two words: one is Greek, the other Latin. All Christians are theists, though not monotheists; for the Protestant has three Gods, while the Romanist adds the Virgin Mary, "the queen of heaven," and worships also a host of saints. The Hebrews have ever been both theists and monotheists, though there are traces in Genesis of an earlier polytheism. Christ was a theist and a monotheist.

It is unfortunate that some theists apply to the Deity meaningless words, such as "infinite," "absolute," etc. Each of these terms contain an negation, and he who uses them simply asserts that the Deity he worships is *not* this or that. He is, in fact, an agnostic or an atheist in so far as he makes use of them: "*Dei determinatio negatio est*" (Spinoza). Against some, at least, of these negations, Dean Mansel protested. To define by a string of negations gives no clearer idea; it merely thrusts the Deity to a distance.

This is no place for our little definitions and formulæ. Shall we dare to sum up in any form of words "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity"? (Isaiah lviii. 15).

"Could we conceive Him, God He could not be:  
A God alone can comprehend a God."—*Young*.

The religion of many devout and high-minded theists consists of little more than morality and metaphysics.

These dry and disputatious systems do not satisfy the soul. But there is a theism which is content to worship humbly without pretending to analyse or to comprehend the Deity.

"We have as little fellowship with the atheist who says that there is no God, as with those theists who profess to know all that is in the mind of God" (Professor Tyndall).

## 56.—AGNOSTICISM.

AN agnostic is a man who declines to concern himself with religion, because in these matters absolute certainty is not attainable. This is true, and it is natural, for those sciences which are farthest removed from the domain of mathematics have least of mathematical certainty.

The existence of widely different opinions among serious and thoughtful persons is a proof that there is much uncertainty in matters of religion. Similarly no educated doctor will deny that in the science of medicine there are doubtful points, and these no trivial ones, but of vital importance. Were medicine an exact science, that is, if the relations of man's body to his surroundings were perfectly understood, the "heresy" of homeopathy could not exist. Yet we do not infer that no science of medicine is possible, although we conclude that much reform is needed. The nostrums of quacks do not make us refuse all medical treatment, nor need the dogmas of priests drive us to despair of theology.

It is irrational to expect certainty and finality in matters which concern the mind, when there is no approach to certainty or finality in those which affect the body. But the fact is, that where the effort and the sacrifice demanded by religion is found irksome, the plea of insufficient evidence affords a convenient pretext for ignoring religion altogether. Let us cease to hanker after a certainty which the great thinkers of the world would long ere now have attained, had it been attainable, and from which we are now as far removed as ever, and let us make up our minds to act in matters that concern our souls, as we do in those that affect our bodies,—on the balance of probability. We shall find that if we compare the chances of idealism against those of materialism, the weight of evidence is overwhelmingly in favour of the former. What more do we require? What more can we expect?

There is a deplorable phase of agnosticism which arises from a lofty philosophic indifference to all religious questions.

Here no argument avails: the amiable and accomplished brother of Seneca (Acts xviii. 17) must go his way. Let us rather be in earnest, were it even for a falsehood, than indifferent to everything.

Professor Huxley claims to have invented the term "agnostic." The word may be new, but the condition of mind which it represents has always existed, and will continue as long as the pendulum of human thought shall oscillate between superstition and materialism.

## 57.—SOCIALISM.

SOCIALISM seeks to improve the condition of the masses by removing privileges and abuses, by ensuring a more reasonable reward for labour, by reducing the hours of toil, and in many other ways. It aims also at introducing a more healthy, simple, and natural mode of life in society at large, at diminishing luxury and ostentation, and at bridging over, as far as possible, the gaps which, at present, separate the wealthy from the poor.

The socialist dreams of a millennium when war and misery shall be no more, when selfishness shall cease, and laws shall be superfluous, where—

“Each heart  
Self-governed, the vast family of love,  
Raised from the common earth by common toil,  
Enjoys the equal produce.”—*Coleridge*.

Socialism is working, in fact, for a reconstruction of society, in which the last remnants of feudalism and mediævalism shall disappear, when human progress shall no longer be impeded by the endowments and by the prejudices of the past, where human life and happiness shall be less at the mercy of absolute power or boundless wealth, and where that courage and disciplined energy which we now devote to war shall be directed rather to winning greater boons from Nature than to wresting from each other the gifts of God.

The socialist looks forward to a better time, when—

“The wretched many shall be  
Less far removed from all that glads the sense,  
From all that softens or ennobles man.”—*Coleridge*.

All these aims and objects are excellent, and all must unite in striving for them. But they will not be obtained by any spon-



taneous efforts of the blind, helpless masses; they will be won, as far as we can ever win them, by the devotion and the suffering of single individuals.

About the end which socialism aims at, no dispute is possible; but we know of no means by which to compass such an end, unless it be religion, which the socialist leaves altogether out of his account.

Socialism implies co-operation; it is (we are assured) a step towards the practical realisation of that communism which was the law of early Christianity (Matt. xix. 21; Acts ii. 44, 45). But co-operation implies and demands a strong feeling of fraternity, and much enthusiasm for the common weal. Without this fervour and this enthusiasm to carry us forward we should but exchange one state of corruption for another. The early Christian communism was the direct outcome of a religious revival, and nothing but a similar outburst of religious feeling will render possible the social reformation which we long for.

Social and political reforms must be based on reforms in religion and in education, which is a branch of religion. Mazzini saw, what our English socialists fail to understand, "the necessity of investing the European republican apostolate with a religious character" ("Faith and the Future"). He says, "The great problem of the day is a religious problem, to which all other questions are but secondary." This is the solemn conviction of one of the best and greatest men whom this generation has produced. Mazzini was not merely a profound and noble thinker, but one who carried his thoughts into action. He endured the uttermost suffering in the cause of human progress, for he was no narrow patriot, but truly cosmopolitan. Truly, Mazzini was a prophet of whom the world was not worthy.

So long as we commit the insane folly of leaving religion to the priest or parson, so long will sacerdotalism laugh to scorn all progress and reform. To attempt reforms in politics, education, law, morals, even in medicine, while religion remains unregenerate, is merely to hack and thrust at the tail of the hydra. Shall we try to purify the water of a stream whose very source is tainted!

Since France rejected the religious reform of the Reformation, her social and political changes have been fruitless and without stability, and the nation has shown every symptom of corruption and decadence. The rewards of idealism cannot be ravished by the methods of materialism.

"Anything would be better than a national society formed for no higher than physical ends, and acknowledging no power greater than its own, and no law higher than its own enactments" (T. K. Arnold). Yet this is precisely the society which socialism would establish.

Maurice has the same warning: "Any reconstruction of society which has not as its basis the doctrine that all things are of God, and which does not lead us to regard all offices as more, not less, divine than we have regarded them hitherto, will be but the reproduction of all ancient corruptions and abuses, with the removal of the good which has counteracted them."

Democracy has no meaning to those who own the higher formula, "God and humanity." He who realises the unity of all mankind in God can neither pledge himself to any political party, nor side with any social clique. The everlasting principles of right and wrong, the bright vision of human brotherhood, these things are not the special concern of high or low, or rich or poor. The class distinctions of this country or of that, the claims of caste, the animosities which rend society, do not exist for us, because we acknowledge but two classes of men,—those who intrigue for their own advantage, and those who labour for right and for the common weal.

## 58.—POSITIVISM.

THIS system may be described as a kind of organised atheism invented by the French philosopher, Auguste Comte. The Comtist believes in no Deity, and hopes for nothing beyond this present life. This materialism places an impassable gulf between him and us.

Positivism may be adapted to a class of practical and prosaic people, philosophical and superior to all human weakness, believing in nothing, and deficient in poetry and mysticism. But if a man once makes up his mind to regard this world as a God-forsaken place of torment, ending in annihilation, it is difficult to see why he should trouble himself in the least about either religion or morality. It is absurd to tell the millions of mortals who are racked by disease or staggering under some bereavement, that out of the infinite miseries of this world a few may at some future time be remedied. Cease your mockery! the sufferer will answer. If there be nothing more in the universe, for us at least, than to struggle for a few short years against the cruelty and cunning of our neighbours, and then to disappear forever—if this, indeed, be all, then what a farce it is to talk about truth and justice! If we are all, just and unjust, honest and dishonest, in the same desperate case, then it matters not a straw whether there is such a thing as truth or honesty.

While rejecting the cardinal doctrines of all religion, Comte has adopted from the practical part of Christianity much that is valuable, and especially the important principle of symbolic teaching. Neither Comte nor any other thinker of these latter days has made, or can make, any great discoveries in religion: for religion follows a process of natural development, as does language, and is in no way subject to individual caprice. It is beyond the power of man to invent a new language or a new

religion, though every man may do something towards forwarding a true and natural development of language and religion, and towards checking a false and unnatural tendency.

The central maxim of positivism, "serve humanity," "live for others," is also that of early Christianity and of modern socialism. It was familiar to the Romans, for it occurs again and again in Marcus Aurelius, and it is the very keystone of the arch of pantheism. The main points of positivist doctrine are thus given by a highly educated disciple of Comte: "A man must live for others,—for the family, the country, humanity. Both heart and intellect must be enlisted in the service of humanity. The will must be disciplined. Progress must be the development of order." Thus positivism and pantheism are at one on several important points, for we can accept the whole of this statement. And we sympathise with the Comtist in his repudiation of those "headlong reformers who think that they can turn the world inside out in five minutes, and then all will go well."

But we must have some idealism, some poetry, in our religion. It is difficult to stand erect in the furnace unless some bright form shapes itself from out the flames. It is well to look forward and backward and around, but shall we not look up?

The Comtist would fain be rid of the supernatural. But the supernatural is like Nature itself, "*expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.*" When comparative mythology has claimed the lovely legends of Greece and of Palestine with all their miracle and marvel, have we banished the supernatural forever? Far from it! The spirit which created these myths is working in us still, raising its protest everywhere against atheism and materialism. And when this impulse is denied its legitimate satisfaction in idealism, it breaks forth in the form of the most grotesque superstitions. Thus the Latin peoples flock to Lourdes and to a dozen other places where their great goddess is supposed to have shown herself (she chooses, as a rule, a picturesque locality), and the more Northern races are busy with "table-turning" and "spirit-rapping," and the nightmares of so-called "spiritualism."

The pantheist holds no communion with these "unclean

spirits" (Matt. xii. 43); nor will he walk through the "dry places" of atheism and agnosticism; nor again can he feel at home in the "empty, swept, and garnished house" of Comte. For we see and hear and feel the supernatural in all around us, and we are well satisfied to sum up all that is above us and beyond us in one short word—God.

The positivist, with much learning and logic, makes the same mistake as the theologian: he seeks a certainty where none is possible. He thinks to come at truth by a process of elimination. By all means let us eliminate what is palpably contrary to reason and experience; for instance the parthenogenesis of Christ, miracles, etc. But the lowest materialist does not assert that Deity and Immortality are contrary to reason. He merely says "you cannot prove these two doctrines." We make no attempt to prove them, firmly as we hold them, for we take them as axioms. But if you eliminate all you cannot prove, then justice and many other abstract things must likewise disappear. No one can ever prove that justice is more than a mere word, a convention which we may regard or disregard just as suits our convenience.

We reach no firmer ground by rejecting the two cardinal doctrines of idealism. We take a downward step, which will lead to a still deeper plunge, for one denial prepares the way for another, and sinks the materialist from darkness into ever deeper gloom.

## 59.—SPIRITISM, MESMERISM, ETC.

THIS is a peculiarly insidious form of superstition, and for this reason young people should be specially warned against it. There is much in spiritism that is attractive. We often find a remarkable absence of bigotry, and we nearly always notice much poetry and sentiment in its votaries.

Many persons of high character and amiable disposition fall into the snares of so-called "spiritualism."

The central delusion of spiritism is that it is possible to communicate with the departed.

Who has not felt an intense longing to draw aside the veil which hides the other world? Who has not yearned for a word of sympathy from some departed friend or relative? Who has not dashed himself, as it were, against the bars which imprison us here below? But it is useless to grasp at what is not revealed. It is worse than useless, it is dangerous, to meddle with this necromancy.

The persons who claim the power of holding intercourse with the spirit-world call themselves "mediums." These mediums are accustomed to throw themselves into a hysterical state of mind which is near akin to madness. Now, it is clear that no wholesome or useful results can be obtained when the human constitution is working in a morbid way. Manifestations may possibly be produced which we do not understand. But there is little to be learned and nothing to be gained by investigating these phenomena.

If a man in sound health claim that he can perform actions hitherto thought impossible, this is purely a matter for impartial scientific investigation. If a man asserts, for instance, that he has "second sight," that he can read a letter which is concealed from his view,



let him practice his accomplishment, if he can find any way of turning it to useful account. We are not in any way concerned.

But if a man claim to control his neighbour's will, either by mesmerism or in any other way, he exerts a power which is dangerous, and from which much harm may follow. No one should permit himself to be thus acted upon, lest he forfeit the freedom of his will. And it is fortunate that these powers cannot be brought to bear upon a healthy person without his own consent.

These questions of second sight and of mesmerism have no connection with religion, and we should have no cause to mention them were it not that these same mediums and mesmerisers frequently claim to bring messages from another world, and to instruct us in the deepest mysteries of existence. They talk about "astral bodies," and a vast multitude of good and evil spirits who swarm around us like those shades which Æneas saw by the banks of the Styx.

And in order to bring these phantoms before the mind, it is necessary to rack the body with every kind of privation and asceticism.

At the bottom of this spiritism lies the very same want of faith which we find in other superstitions, and above all in so-called orthodoxy. The man of little faith who feels within himself no presence of God's spirit, no revelation of right and wrong, must lean upon the outward revelation of priest or Bible. The wretch who fears his God, from want of faith, because he only half believes that He is good, must shelter himself behind some mediator or intercessor. So again the spiritist has not faith enough to trust the Deity that all is well with the dear departed, and that all will be well with us too if we love the right. He cannot leave his loved ones in the hands of a faithful Creator (1 Peter iv. 19), he must have proofs that they are happy and still care for him, he longs to see them through the "gates ajar." An unscrupulous medium works upon his aching heart, and deludes him with rappings and tapplings in a darkened room.

A rational faith is the only refuge from these delusions.



## 60.—PANTHEISM.

THE pantheist believes, with Paul, that "in God we live and move and have our being," and that "God is not far from every one of us" (Acts xvii. 27, 28). He believes that God animates and sustains all creatures, high and lowly, that He is not only in a past age and a particular spot—Jerusalem, Mecca, or Benares—but now and everywhere. Pantheism is the root and basis both of Christianity, of so-called paganism, and also of every other religion that holds any germs of truth.

As in society, there are three stages: first, the family; next, the clan, sept, tribe, or nation; thirdly, the era, dawning now, when men shall be cosmopolite, when the barriers of nationality shall be broken down, and there shall be for all humanity one citizenship, one country from pole to tropic, one people from the busy Atlantic eastward and westward to the Pacific with its girdle of fire.

So also there are in religion three stages, which roughly correspond to these: first, the fetish or idol-worship of the lowest races and the least developed intellects; secondly, the various forms of polytheism (including Christianity), partial and imperfect views of truth, arising from a partial and imperfect knowledge of Nature and the laws of Nature; and lastly, the glorious pantheism to which human thought is tending.

We look for a religion which shall combine as in a focus the mystic truths foreshadowed by the symbolism of Egypt and of Chaldæa, the poetry of the Aryan Hindoo and the philosophy of Greece, the idealism of the Kelt and the Slave, and the practical wisdom of the Roman and the Teuton.

The stern monotheism of the Hebrews will blend with milder forms of faith, while progress and culture will no longer be excluded from our creeds.

The prophet of Galilee will be better understood, and, consequently, more beloved, for instead of making him the corner-stone of a mass of dogma, we shall for the first time attempt to realise that human brotherhood which he both preached and practised.

We are waiting for "a universal revelation which will be what ecclesiastical systems, what philosophical liberalism, has failed to be,—the assertion of a humanity in which all nations are equally partakers" (Maurice). These noble words betray a consciousness that all our present revelations are partial and tribal, not universal and cosmopolitan.

A religion which would embrace all mankind must be truly "catholic" or universal in its sympathies, not narrow and exclusive. The Jews and other monotheists will never accept the dogmas of Christianity, nor is there the smallest chance, fortunately, of the three great Christian Churches uniting to enslave human thought. In other words, Christianity is not, and can never be, catholic.

When a truly universal faith shall rise, then, "not till then, will terminate man's infancy;" not until then will religion, as the word implies (*religat religio*), bind all men together in the bond of brotherhood, so that humanity at last will own "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. iv. 5). "Tous auront au ciel un Dieu, et une patrie sur la terre" (Lammenais). "Patriam meam esse mundum sciam, et præsides Deos" (Seneca). Then, when the fiery enthusiasm which a higher faith alone can inspire shall have melted away our miserable prejudices of race and creed, then our motto will no longer be, "Dieu et mon droit" (strange mixture of religion and egotism), but "God and humanity." This is the millennium of which men dream, thus alone can the golden age be partially restored.

Christianity has brought no millennium. We have indeed, as Lessing says, made no serious effort to put its teaching into practice. Nor will a religion higher far than Christianity make this world a paradise; no, not even if each individual should carry out its teaching to the uttermost. But may we not hope with Mazzini that a new dispensation will realise some, at least,

of the ideals of that which is now passing away. To doubt this would indeed be to despair of human progress.

Many ideals must ever remain unrealised, and those philosophers are over-sanguine who imagine that any schemes or systems will avail to lift from humanity its load of misery. The angel with flaming sword (Gen. iii. 24) stands between us and the garden. Every event of life, each fact of history, reminds us that here "we have no continuing city" (Heb. xiii. 14), and that this world "is not our rest" (Micah ii. 10).

## 61.—CHRISTIAN PANTHEISM.

It may be objected that Christianity is one thing and pantheism another.

This is not the case. On the contrary, the best pantheist will also be the best Christian, and the Christian who understands his religion best will approach nearest to pantheism.

For who and what is a Christian? Surely "true Christians are all those who try to think and act according to the precept and example of Christ" (Rev. Ch. Hargrove). May not a theist or a pantheist strive to resemble Christ in thought, word, and deed? And if so, is he not a Christian?

If we permit the priest to ostracise all those who refuse to pronounce his shibboleth, and to decide who is and who is not entitled to the name of Christian, there will soon be an end of all religious liberty.

No reasonable definition of the term "Christian" will exclude the devout theist or pantheist; and conversely there is no reason why a Christian may not also be a pantheist. If he believes in one great Spirit ever present everywhere, in whom we live and move and have our being, he is not far from sharing our higher and nobler faith.

Pantheism is indeed not antagonistic to Christianity, to Hellenism, and still less to Judaism. Each of these comes into contact with pantheism through its higher elements, while pantheism embraces all and each of the partial and tribal religions of the world, just as the broad ocean includes the little gulfs and bays and inlets that lie round its shores.

In one all-important point every one of the existing religious systems will be found wanting if weighed in the balance against pantheism. None of them is or can be cosmopolitan.

Romanism, for instance, is peculiar to the Latin and the Keltic races ; it was developed mainly by these races, and partakes of their good and their bad qualities.

It is imaginative, impulsive, poetical, but at the same time it has become artificial and unpractical.

Protestantism, again, is mainly confined to the Teutonic and Scandinavian races among which it arose ; and, like these Northern peoples, it is more intellectual, practical, and progressive, but at the same time harsh and unattractive.

It would not be difficult to show that the popular forms of religion not only reflect the characteristics of the races among which they were developed, but that even the climate of each region reacts upon the creed of its inhabitants.

Thus Protestantism assumes a harder, narrower aspect in the bleak mountains of Switzerland and Scotland. Romanism takes its most degraded form in the enervating climate of tropical America.

But the different races of mankind are mingling to an extent that has never before been possible in the history of the world.

And there is also an interchange of ideas, not only between the warmer and the less favoured districts of Europe, but between Europe and the remotest regions of Asia. Yes, and the distant past is yielding up to us the treasures of its mystic thought. It would indeed be strange if, from these new conditions, these great opportunities of enlightenment, these mighty workings of the human mind, there did not arise a grand and universal system of religion, marked by no peculiarities of race, narrowed by no national prejudices, and warped by no influence of climate.

Pantheism alone can fulfil these conditions, for it alone is cosmopolitan, universal, catholic.

Pantheism has no dogmas to defend, no difficulties to resolve ; no doubts to distract, and no problems to perplex us.

The pantheist has "dreamed the dream of the soul's slow disentanglement" (Edward Carpenter). He has awaked from the slumber of superstition. He sees imprinted on all things the likeness of God, and he is satisfied (Psalm xvii 16).

We are not concerned to defend the lower developments of pantheism, still less to choose between the different speculative forms of our religion.

But "we are assured that both the theoretical atheism of the unbeliever and the practical atheism termed orthodoxy, are destined to be vanquished by a force which they as yet but dimly perceive—*viz.*, the influence of the pantheistic spirit" (Macall, in "Freelight").

We leave it to more learned writers to compare the pantheism of Greece with that of Egypt and of India.

Philosophers may sound the deep thoughts of Averrhoes, Scotus, and Spinosà; for our religion has its intellectual aspect.

But let us beware the danger of "merging religion in an intellectual system" (Picton). No religion can have a claim upon humanity which requires for its apprehension a life of learned leisure. No system can hope to prevail which is not, in its essentials, so simple that a child may comprehend it. What, indeed, can be at once plainer and more profound, simpler and yet more solemn, than the belief in one great Spirit ever present everywhere?

This is our all-sufficient theory and doctrine. It is based on no argument, requires no confirmation, and admits of no contradiction. This rock is our sure refuge. Here the din of the disputing sects does not reach our ears, nor are we shaken by the storms of doubt.

I conclude with a passage from Picton's valuable essay on "Christian Pantheism." And I select these words because they afford an answer to the obvious question, "Why must we prefer pantheism to all other forms of faith?" "Because it involves less arbitrary assumption, and because it is more manifestly congruous with facts as we know them than any other theory whatever.

"Pantheism takes its stand upon that feeling of an infinite unity which grows in strength with every extension of our knowledge. It is involved in the increasing discredit of every theory which

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necessitates a creation out of nothing. It is the inevitable corollary of the doctrines of continuity and evolution.

“Pantheism assumes nothing but the fact of our own consciousness, and its education by the perceived contrasts and agreements of an outer world. It finds a revelation in the present moment, which is the sum of all the past and the germ of all the future.”



## 62.—CREDO.

I BELIEVE in One God, Source and Sustainer of all that is good, Destroyer of evil and wrong: Who is present at all times and in all places: Who animates all creatures, high and lowly: "in Whom we live and move and have our being:" from Whom and by Whom are Order and Justice, Power and Beauty, Reason and Truth, Peace and Love, Gladness and Light.

I worship and adore the Deity revealed in Nature, in Humanity, and in Conscience. I have Faith in His power to save, and Hope of Forgiveness and Peace.

I believe that the righteous live beyond the grave, and "I look for the Resurrection of the dead."

I believe in the Brotherhood of Man, and in the still closer "Communion of Saints:"

And I believe that Culture will raise men above the errors and superstitions of the past, and that a more reasonable system of Religion will help forward the Progress of Humanity.

"This creed is inadequate." Then take your pen and write a better one.

If learned men would provide us with a reasonable creed, unlearned persons would not be compelled to attempt it.

"Creeds are a part of orthodoxy; we heretics must not commit ourselves to any creed."

But if orthodoxy should follow reason in any particular, how can you avoid walking side by side with her? The pauper makes no statement of his possessions, nor the atheist of his creed. But the man who has obtained some money writes it down, and he who believes anything need not be ashamed to avow a short summary or creed.

“A creed can serve for those only who are in a given stage of intellectual progress, it will divide men by excluding all others.”

Of course! No theistic creed can possibly be accepted by a Romanist or a Baptist, or an atheist or a Comtist, any more than we can admit their creed or want of creed. Writing “New Zealand” on a letter does not remove a man to the Antipodes, it merely indicates the fact that he resides there. So a creed does not divide men, but it marks a division which exists, and which it would be dangerous to ignore.

“All creeds must in time become obsolete.” Certainly! And the house you inhabit will one day be a ruin. We are no more bound to consider what may be the creed of our great-grandchildren than to accept without modification the religious formulæ of our ancestors.

## 63.—UNITARIAN BELIEF.

UNITARIANS are a body of Christians to whom we owe respect and gratitude, for they have resisted superstition and sacerdotalism, upheld rational religion, and above all they have asserted, through evil and through good report, the vital truth that God is One. The Unitarians alone of Christian sects have shown any sympathy with religious reform. Their ministers are men of high character and attainments.

The Unitarian creed is a compromise between orthodoxy and theism, but it is not rigidly fixed, and a theist meets with a friendly welcome in most of their congregations.

I am enabled, by the kindness of my friend the Rev. Charles Hargrove, to give the following short summary of the doctrines held by the denomination.

“What do Unitarians believe? The difficulty in giving what is called a straightforward answer is that Unitarians have never accepted a creed, or authorised a catechism or statement of doctrine. If anyone desires to join them, it is supposed that he does so because he finds their forms of worship acceptable, and agrees more or less with what he generally hears preached from their pulpits : no questions are asked as to what he believes or disbelieves, he becomes a member because he wishes to do so. Of neither minister or layman is a profession of faith required. The only obligation incurred is, that each should do his part for the congregation he belongs to, and the cause which it represents.

“So it comes to pass, that some Unitarians are more ‘orthodox’ and some more ‘advanced’ in their religious beliefs, but no one has the right to find fault with another for believing too much or too little. Still there are certain things on which there is a general agreement, and we may say, without committing anyone, that—

“*Unitarians do not believe* in the Trinity, or that there are three persons in One God.

“In the Incarnation, or that Jesus Christ is God and man in one person.

“In Verbal Inspiration, or that the Bible is the infallible Word of God.

“ In the Atonement, as meaning that man is a fallen creature, born in sin, and needs a mediator and sacrifice to reconcile him with God.

“ In Justification by Faith, or that no man is good and just in God’s sight unless he believe and feel rightly about Jesus Christ and religion.

“ In Death as the end of all effort and all hope, or that this life is only a probation, and that weal or woe unchangeable follow after it.

“ In Satan and Hell, or that there is in God’s universe any place or person, in which evil, and hatred, and misery are everlasting.

“ *Unitarians do believe* that there is One God ; and that all who ever so dimly recognise, and, ‘ in spirit and in truth,’ reverence an Unseen Power which ‘ makes for righteousness,’ are His accepted worshippers, ‘ for the Father seeketh such to worship him.’

“ That Jesus of Nazareth was a great teacher, well called Christ (or the anointed), because ‘ God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power ’ (Acts x. 38), and that true Christians are all those who try to think and act according to his precepts and example.

“ That the Bible, the collection of our sacred writings, is the best of all books of religion, inasmuch as it contains more that is true and good and helpful about God and righteousness than does any other book.

“ That man is the child of God, and has always free access to Him as a son—even a prodigal—has to a good father.

“ That Prayer is a lifting-up of our thoughts to God, and the expression of the heart’s desire in His Presence.

“ That Salvation consists in deliverance from misery, sin, and error ; and that forms of religion are to be judged of by the measure of their efficiency in saving men from these evils

“ That it will fare with us ill or well after death, just as we have lived well or ill in this world, according to the words of the prophet—‘ Say ye of the righteous, that it shall be well with him, for he shall eat the fruit of his doings. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him ’ (Isaiah iii. 10, 11).

“ Finally, that God is more good than the best of fathers, and more just than the most upright of judges ; that we can therefore commit ourselves to Him in absolute confidence that He will always do with us as is for our true welfare, here and everywhere, now and forever.”

## 64.—RUSKIN'S CREED AND DECALOGUE.

THE following summary is taken from the "Creed of St. George's Guild."

1. Belief and trust in the living God : love of God, who is good, and whose laws must be kept.
2. "Trust in the nobleness of human nature, in the majesty of its faculties, the fulness of its mercy, and the joy of its love."  
Love thy neighbour as thyself.
3. Duty of labour and diligence.
4. Against deceit, cruelty, and wrong to men.
5. "I will not kill nor hurt any living creature needlessly, nor destroy any beautiful thing, but will strive to save and comfort all gentle life, and guard and perfect all natural beauty upon the earth."
6. "I will strive to raise my own body and soul daily into higher powers of duty and happiness ; not in rivalry or contention with others, but for the help, delight, and honour of others, and for the joy and peace of my own life."
7. Obedience to lawful authority, so far as is consistent with the law of God.

In spite of our deep reverence for Ruskin, we cannot accept, as a complete expression of our faith, this creed, or any other, which makes no mention of a future state. We admire the nobility of Ruskin's life, his genius, his eloquence, and, above all, his grand idealism, and we thank God that so great and good a man has lived in this generation.

But we cannot allow even his high authority to turn us aside from the glorious hope of immortality.

The belief in a merciful Creator, which Ruskin rightly places

at the head of his creed, is not one whit more certain, more self-evident, or more capable of demonstration, than the hope of immortality which he excludes. It is as easy to find arguments against the one belief as against the other, and as difficult to answer them.

This doctrine is not one which we can pass over in silence as an unimportant detail, or a private matter. We either believe or we disbelieve it. In the former case it must find a place in our creed.

I give Ruskin's creed (with this protest) because it is of the utmost importance to know what such a man believes. He is no mere intellectual speculator and system-builder; his theories may not always be consistent with one another: but he is a man whose noble thoughts have been associated with a noble life.

Ruskin's opinions outweigh those of our philosophers and theologians in proportion as his life has surpassed theirs in earnestness and devotion to truth.

*Confession of Faith by Professor Blackie.*

“ Creeds and confessions? Well, I will confess  
 An honest creed. Where'er I look abroad  
 I see the living form and face of God,  
 Which men call Nature, all whose loveliness  
 I garner in my soul with pious care.  
 And when I look within in thoughtful hour,  
 I feel a shaping presence and a power  
 That makes me know the same great God is there.  
 What more? That were enough, had men been true  
 To their best selves; but by base lust enticed,  
 They fell, till God stretched out His hand and drew  
 Them from the mire by His own son the Christ.  
 Leave me to him, in his bright face to see  
 God's imaged will from gloss and dogma free!”

From *Dante*:

“ I in One God believe,  
 One sole, eternal Godhead, by whose love  
 All heaven is moved.”

From *Coleridge* ("Religious Musings") :

" Believe thou, O my soul,  
Life is a vision shadowy of truth ;  
And vice and anguish and the wormy grave  
Shapes of a dream. The veiling clouds retire,  
And lo ! the throne of the redeeming God  
Wraps in one light earth, heaven and deepest hell."

*Children's Creed* (from a little reading-book by Pitman) :

" In the sun, the moon, the sky,  
In the mountains wild and high,  
In the thunder, in the rain,  
In the winds, the woods, the plain,  
In the little birds that sing :  
God is seen in everything."



## 65.—DECALOGUE.

1. OBEY your Conscience, and you will have that "peace of God which passes understanding." Remember that Conscience points to duty, and duty demands an effort of the will.
2. Love your neighbour (Matt. xxii. 39, and John iv. 8), and you will share the happiness of those who live not for themselves.

This is the "royal law" (James ii. 8), the golden rule.

Prove your philanthropy by doing things that are not easy and do not bring credit. Devote one-tenth of your income to charity. If the tithe is too difficult, come as near to it as you can.

3. Cultivate all the powers of your mind, not merely the one faculty by which you obtain your living. Keep your mind in contact with thoughts, and with things that are true and beautiful.

Never read accounts of cruelty, sensuality, or dishonesty, lest the mind be tainted; for all knowledge is assimilation to the object of knowledge.

4. Train and exercise your body, and avoid as far as possible stimulants, luxuries, and excesses.

"Mens sana" is best preserved "in corpore sano" (Socrates, in "Xen. Mem." iii. 2).

5. Acknowledge no other authority than Reason. But pay great deference to the opinions of good men of the past and of the present. Do not be hasty to adopt new opinions. Never reason for the sake of reasoning: "*que la raison n' étouffe pas la charité.*"

6. Never conceal your opinions, nor be ashamed of your faith. To conceal a truth is as bad as to proclaim a falsehood.

7. Study Nature, that your faith may be founded on fact, that you may escape superstition ; and be able to distinguish words from things, reality from appearance.
8. Study your own character. Find out where you are at fault, and strive in the opposite direction. Guard against the vice you most lean to : be it sloth and sensuality, anger and ill-temper, covetousness and dishonesty, untruth and meanness, cowardice and apathy, pride and egotism. This is the maxim that came down from heaven (Socrates, in "Xen. Mem." iv. 2, 24).
9. Reverence your parents (Socrates, in "Xen. Mem." ii. 2 ; and Exod. xx. 12).  
Respect old age, and look up to all who are stronger, braver, more learned, or more devoted than yourself.  
Especially seek to follow the example of heroic characters, such as Socrates, Christ, and Epictetus.  
"Recherche ce qu'il y a de bon et de beau dans la vie des peuples et des individus qui nous ont précédés, et reproduis le dans ta propre vie."
10. Reflect, at least once a day, how short is your stay in this world : and think of the great Spirit from Whom you came, and to Whose presence you must return.

## 66.—CHILDREN'S CATECHISM.

1. WHAT is Religion ?

Religion is doing God's will.

2. Why should we do God's will ?

Because those who do the will of God are better and happier.

3. How can we find out God's will ?

From Nature, Humanity, and Conscience.

4. Is there any special revelation of God's will ?

The lives of all great and good men are a revelation.

5. Is there any specially inspired book from which God's will may be learned ?

All good books are inspired by God.

6. Has any church or priest received authority from God to explain His will to us ?

Certainly not. There is no authority higher than that of Reason, which is divine.

7. Can philosophers and theologians instruct us in the will of God ?

No man by searching can find out God ; but by doing the good which lies within our power we can alone gain knowledge of heavenly things.

8. How many Religions are there ?

There can be but one true Religion, for God is One, and His laws do not vary. But there are many systems of Religion.

9. Does it matter to which religious system we belong ?

It is of vast importance, for Religion rules our lives.

10. Are we bound to assert our opinions ?

It is dishonest to conceal one's faith.

11. Should we try to propagate our ideas ?

Those who labour to spread the truth will not lose their reward

12. What is your duty as regards Nature ?  
I must observe and study those laws of Nature on which health of mind and body depends.
13. Mention some of these laws.  
Cleanliness, temperance, continence, work.
14. What is the penalty of neglecting cleanliness ?  
Neglect of cleanliness may cause skin disease and other sufferings.
15. Is there any other than personal cleanliness ?  
We must not pollute the running stream, whose waters are holier than the "holy water" in which the Romanist dips his finger ; and we must not contaminate the air.
16. What is the penalty of polluted water ?  
Typhoid, cholera, and other diseases.
17. What is the penalty of foul air ?  
Foul air causes fever and illness.
18. What is the penalty of abusing alcohol ?  
Drink injures the nervous system and destroys the health.
19. What is the penalty of incontinence ?  
Incontinence enfeebles the mind and the body. It may also cause an incurable disease.
20. What is the penalty of idleness ?  
The idler must sooner or later become degraded.
21. How much work ought a man to do ?  
Not more than eight hours per day, and six days per week.
22. Is recreation a duty ?  
A man who attempts to live without recreation will suffer for it as certainly as the man who lives without work.
23. Which are the best recreations ?  
Music, poetry, natural history, etc.
24. Which are the worst ?  
Betting, gambling, and killing harmless animals.
25. What is the penalty of neglecting bodily exercise ?  
Bad health and want of vigour.
26. Are all these matters connected with Religion ?  
They form the foundation of Religion.

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27. Of what does Humanity consist ?  
First, my own family ; secondly, my own race or nation ;  
thirdly, all mankind.
28. What duty do you owe to your parents ?  
Affection, respect, and every service in my power.
29. What is the "golden rule" in dealing with your neighbours ?  
Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you.
30. Explain this rule in other words.  
I must not injure my neighbour in thought, word, or deed.
31. Mention some of the sins against our neighbours which we must strive to avoid.  
Hatred and want of charity, evil speaking and slander, falsehood, meanness, and dishonesty, cruelty and oppression.
32. Is it sufficient to keep within the law ?  
No. We must specially abhor those sins which cannot be punished by any law, such as ingratitude, avarice, and taking advantage of another's ignorance or weakness.
33. How must we behave to our superiors ?  
I must regard with reverence all those who are braver, nobler, and more disinterested than myself, whether they be richer or poorer.
34. How must we treat our inferiors ?  
I must be merciful to those who are unfortunate or degraded.
35. Have all men an equal claim upon our help and sympathy ?  
Those who share our monotheistic faith, of whatever race or language, are spiritually related to us, and have the closest claim upon us ; for friendship in God is the highest friendship.
36. What is our duty towards the laws ?  
To obey them if they are just. But in case they are unjust, and we are unable to alter them, we must resist them.
37. Must I side with that political party which forwards my own interests, or those of my own class ?  
Certainly not. We must disregard all political parties, and support only such measures as are for the good of the whole community.

38. Is it allowable to abstain altogether from politics?  
No. The right government of the country is the concern of every citizen.
39. In whose hands ought we to place the supreme power?  
We should be ruled by men of learning and high character, trained for the purpose.
40. What is your double duty as regards your Conscience?  
I must obey the dictates of my Conscience, and also do my utmost that it may be enlightened.
41. What is the penalty of disregarding Conscience?  
He who disobeys his Conscience injures his soul, that is to say, he degrades the highest part of his nature.
42. In what way can the Conscience be enlightened?  
First, by reading every day a portion of some good book; secondly, by attending religious service once a week.
43. What is the penalty of an unenlightened Conscience?  
Either superstition and priestcraft, or wild and irrational religious ideas.
44. What things do most injury to the Conscience?  
Bad companions and immoral books.
45. What is meant by Salvation and Redemption, and how can we attain to it?  
Sin is the only real danger of the soul. All those are saved who strive to avoid sin. All those are redeemed who steadfastly purpose to follow Nature, to serve Humanity, and to obey Conscience.
46. Is a good intention all that we require?  
True religion in the heart must show itself in the life.
47. What is Faith?  
Faith is the confidence that it is well with God's servants here and hereafter, whatever may happen.
48. How can we obtain this trust in God?  
Only by deeds of self-denial and charity to man. There is no other pathway to peace and the favour of God.



67.—CALENDAR: THE FOUR SEASONS, AND THE FOUR GREAT REFORMATIONS.

It is a good custom to read in public once a week the words of great prophets and teachers.

This forms a higher education for the nation, and is, in fact, the only spiritual teaching which most men obtain. But it is irrational to read in our churches no book except the Old and the New Testament, for this is based on the false idea that no other books are inspired.

And it is equally unreasonable to commemorate on fixed days Christ only and a few of his followers, as if there were no other prophets and saints and martyrs than these few.

Comte has attempted to remedy this anomaly by dedicating each Sunday throughout the year to the memory of some conspicuous historical figure. But many of the men and women who appear in the positivist calendar have no claim to be remembered with gratitude, nor is their life in any sense a lesson to after ages. Comte has followed a false principle, and for this reason we can no more adopt his calendar than we can accept a great deal of his teaching. Greatness alone does not rank a man among the immortals, unless he be both great and good.

If we are to commemorate mere power of intellect or of body, without considering to what use this gift of God is applied, men "*ingenii magni magis quam boni*," to use an expression of Livy, then we must place in our pantheon Bonaparte, Alexander, and why not also Goliath of Gath! It is possible to be great in art, in war, in philosophy, and yet to lead a life of selfishness. Napoleon was great as a general, but as a man we see little to admire in him. Shakespeare, again, maybe the prince of playwrights, but this alone gives him no claim to our reverence and affection. He did not live, like Milton, a bulwark of religion; he did not die,



like Byron, fighting on the side of the oppressed. From the great questions of his day, Shakespeare, like Goethe, stood utterly aloof. "It is impossible to discover whether his faith, if faith there were, was Romanist or Protestant. It is difficult, indeed, to say whether he had any religious belief or no" (J. R. Green, "History").

Such was his attitude towards religion, even if it be not true that he held the Reformers up to ridicule in the person of Falstaff. Nor was Shakespeare, like Shelley, the friend of the poor and the oppressed. He flatters his patrons, the wealthy and the powerful, but the poor are "blocks and stones, and more than senseless things."

Not in this spirit must we construct our calendar. Let us rather commemorate those who have loved and helped their fellows, and left us an example of a noble life.

Nature has made a fourfold division of the year: Midsummer, Midwinter, and the double Equinox. And the periods of human progress are also four. First, Javeh strove with Baal, Zion with Babylon, Israel with Canaan.

This was the earliest stage of religious reform: not the first, perhaps, in the history of the world, but the first that we have knowledge of. For the "chosen people," that tribe of Arab fanatics, were indeed the Protestants of their day, and it is suspected by recent writers that Abraham exiled himself from the Euphrates valley because his soul rebelled against the superstitions of a degraded polytheism (Z. Ragozin, "Chaldæa").

The next great period was that in which Christ strove with Zeus for the empire of the world. Paganism, that is the beautiful and poetical polytheism of Greece, takes the place of the Babylonian Sabaism. And Christianity is substituted for the older Judaism. The combatants have altered, but the contest is the same. Progress, uncouth and vigorous, still grapples with the polished and venerable past.

At the Reformation of the sixteenth century the cycle has come round once more. The despised and struggling sect has grown and spread and risen to power and dignity. Abuses have crept in, corruption is at work. A new reform is needed. For the

third time the struggle is renewed. A hundred thousand victims are writhing in the flames or groaning in the dungeon. But Protestantism prevails. The rack and torture, the midnight massacre, the Spanish armament, the secret plot, all have failed to check the "Lutheran heresy."

Surely at length the goal is reached : true religion is established : superstition has hidden its head. Far from it ! Once more Reaction is challenged by Reform, and the fourth cycle of human progress has commenced. The star of a new and higher dispensation shines brightly in the heavens, though the prophet has not yet appeared at whose feet we must lay our offerings. Many are the "shepherds keeping watch," as of old, for truth and progress, and the light which they have seen is that of a day more glorious than any which has gone before. The dispensation which they herald will differ as essentially from Protestantism as that does now from Romanism, and it will draw to itself all those who are weary of formalism and heavy-laden with the burden of superstition.

If these principles be accepted, our calendar will take some such form as this :

1. *Paganism and Christianity* : Christmas and New Year to Easter or the vernal Equinox.  
Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, John the Baptist, Christ, Paul, Epictetus, Aurelius, Hypatia.  
If Socrates be placed about "Advent," Christ will fall, as usual, at Christmas.
2. *Rome and Reform* : Easter to Midsummer.  
Wycliffe, Waldo, Luther, Anne Ascue, Cranmer, Milton, etc
3. *Protestantism and Progress* : Midsummer to Michaelmas or the autumn Equinox.  
Readings from Coleridge, Wordsworth, Schiller, Lammenais, Channing, Theodore Parker, Mazzini, Carlyle, Ruskin, Renan, Martineau, Robertson, etc.
4. *Baal and Javeh* : Michaelmas to Christmas or New Year.  
Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, David, etc.

This humble suggestion for a reformed calendar will appear profane to the orthodox, and ridiculous to the atheist. This is natural, for if the writer has pleased either the bigot or the materialist, he has failed of his purpose.

But the theist will take it for granted that for us men of Aryan race, Kelt or Teuton, the Semitic heroes of the Old and the New Testaments must not monopolise the whole of the fifty-two Sundays in the year.

Socrates deserves not only to be commemorated, but also to be carefully studied. For his story is not, like that of Christ, hopelessly entangled with myth; and his life, though less dramatic and sensational, is more noble and more dignified than that of the enthusiastic and unlettered Galilean prophet. A soldier of steady courage who saves his comrade's life: a statesman of high purpose who heeded not the shouts of the multitude: a teacher who, rather by example than precept, restrained from vice the most brilliant and unscrupulous of the Greeks. The whole life of Socrates is a lesson of righteousness; and all may look on the divine serenity of his last moments, and learn that perfect peace is granted to all, Christian or pagan, without the intervention of church or priest, who follow the light of reason and obey the voice of conscience.

A religious calendar which should exclude Plato would be at least as irrational as that of Comte, which excludes Christ. In Plato the idealism of the Aryan race reached its highest point, just as that of the Semitic was summed up in Christ. Plato was called by some of the early Christian "fathers" a forerunner of Christ. It would be more correct to say that but for the influence of Plato's thought, Christianity would have remained either a Jewish sect or an Eastern superstition.

This question has been dealt with from a broad church point of view by the Rev. E. Hatch, Vice-Principal of St. Mary Hall, Oxford.

The three great thinkers of Greece stand to each other in much the same relation as the three great prophets of Palestine. As modern philosophy may in one sense be traced to Socrates, so modern religion originated with John the Baptist.

Plato was the disciple of Socrates, as Christ was of John. As Plato carried on the teaching of his lamented master, so the preaching of John was taken up by Christ.

And, lastly, as the brilliant idealism of Plato was supplemented and corrected by the more sober and practical genius of Aristotle, so Paul devoted himself to the practical details of the new religion which his more gifted predecessor had founded. The parallel might, indeed, be extended farther. For instance, Aristotle, though Greek by race, was of Macedonian nationality; and similarly, Paul, though of Hebrew parentage, was a Roman citizen, born in Asia Minor.

It is not necessary to be a student of philosophy in order to be interested in Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Among purely historical figures there are no greater names, and it is not possible to conceive of a rational religious system which should ignore them. The main facts about these three great men can be as easily taught to children as the events in the life of John or Christ or Paul. Of course the philosophical writings of Plato and Aristotle are unsuited to children; so, also, for that matter, are the Pauline epistles. The life of a great and good man is one thing, his theories are another. Neither the subtleties of Greek thought, nor the complications of Paul's theology, form an essential part of religion.

If religion is ever to become for the mass of men more than a mere matter of sentiment; if the materialist shall ever raise his eyes from the ground, and the idealist shall ever find his footing firm; in a word, if a reconciliation is ever to be effected between religion and science, it will assuredly not be until the Aryan element in religion is strengthened—until men are as familiar from their youth up with Socrates, the first martyr of truth—with Plato, the greatest prophet of immortality—with the godlike Aurelius and the more than saintly Epictetus, as they are now with John and Christ and Paul.

But we need more than this. Religion will be unpractical, unreal, unnatural, so long as we refuse to fill up the gap between the distant past and the present day. We must get rid of the idea

that ancient races had any monopoly of saints and prophets, and we must not suppose that religion is a thing imported, like figs and almonds, from the Levant. Men of our own race and language can be, and have been, prophets, martyrs, saints, and heroes. In what respect are Wycliffe, Cramner, and Milton inferior to those worthies of old? Precisely as we are not content to dismiss Socrates as a "heathen philosopher," so we refuse to regard Milton merely as the author of "Paradise Lost." For we see in him not only a poet, but also a patriot and a prophet. He was the central figure of that great religious movement which separated England finally from the Roman races of Europe and united us to Germany. We desire, therefore, to have Milton put before us at least once in the year as "the highest and completest type of Puritanism." We wish to see "the still, calm beauty of Milton's life" (Green, "History"), to hear his proud answer to the brutal taunt of the Duke of York when poor and old and blind, and to be reminded that there was nothing narrow or illiberal or gloomy, nothing "Philistine," in fact, in that higher Protestantism which has mainly made England what she is.

But many persons are for leaving all this to chance—they object to a definite system of any sort. So much the worse; for while this blindness lasts, progress, like Samson, will make sport for his enemies. If an imperfect system holds the ground, it is mere waste of time to attack it, unless we are prepared to substitute a better. For the worst system will triumph over anarchy, and the weakest organisation will prevail against disorder and apathy.



§8.—CEREMONY OF MARRIAGE.

1. HYMN or anthem.
2. The clergyman, minister, or other person officiating, asks the man :—  
Are you of age? Yes.  
Have you a reasonable expectation of being able to support a family? Yes.
3. He asks the woman :—  
Are you of age? Yes.  
Do you marry of your own free will? Yes.
4. He asks them both :—  
Have you seriously considered the step you are about to take? Yes.  
Has either of you concealed from the other anything of vital importance? No.
5. He asks the congregation :—  
Does anyone present protest against this marriage?
6. A short homily may then be read, if it is thought desirable.
7. Both the man and the woman repeat these words :—  
“We solemnly agree, in the sight of God, to live together as man and wife.”
8. They exchange rings, sign their names, and receive the congratulations of their friends.

## 69.—PSALMS AND HYMNS.

It is difficult to conceive of religion apart from poetry and music, and hard to imagine any spiritual life without songs of praise. The Jesuit L.D.S. is surely a better motto than L.S.D. The greatest man of the Aryan race, and the greatest of the Semitic have set us the example. Socrates, good soldier and sober philosopher, as far removed as is possible from any kind of sentimentality, occupied his last moments in composing a hymn; and Christ, in the solemn hour before his passion, sang a psalm (Mark xiv. 26).

Rational religion will in time provide itself with suitable "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Meanwhile we must avoid those hymns, Christian or not, the sentiment of which is revolting: for instance, "The Fountain Filled with Blood!" and those still more objectionable ones which are tainted with "Ancient and Modern" sacerdotalism. We must select those hymns, Christian or pagan, which are most musical, poetical, and spiritual.

Why should not the maiden chant her "Ave Maria" to the "blessed Virgin" or to the "chaste Diana"? Why should not the youth sing the praises of Christ, or of Apollo, type of manly grace and vigour? We can admire the ideal represented by Apollo, or Christ, or Diana, or Mary, without any danger of idolatry, without even caring to inquire whether any of these persons ever existed.

So long as we insist upon our right to put the true and reasonable, not the theological, interpretation on such terms as "salvation," "Holy Ghost," "Trinity," etc., the best of the Christian hymns will be as full of comfort and encouragement for us as for other worshippers.

We are in no way pledged to those dreary hymns which, as Wilmott ("Pleasures of Literature") says, "have been intoned



through the noses of generations." Superstition must have no monopoly of beauty, sentiment, poetry, or music.

A reasonable collection of hymns is much to be desired. Nor are materials wanting. In the Hebrew psalms, in the grand "Benedicite omnia opera," and in a hundred others, there is no trace of superstition or of sacerdotalism.

*Te Deum Laudamus.*

Based on that by F. W. Newman.

1. We praise God who reigns in heaven and earth,  
We praise Him who dwells in our souls,  
Our ever-present Guide and Comforter.
2. No voice can tell God's greatness,  
No heart can know all His goodness,  
He is Father of all.
3. The longings of the spirit are deep ;  
Only God can fill the heart when it is empty,  
Longing for truth and for right.
4. God sends peace and rest : with Him is no misery :  
But sorrow and pain are hallowed,  
And hardship is relieved, and fear is calmed ;  
For God makes His worshippers blessed.
5. Blessed is the presence of God most holy :  
Blessed is it to know His laws and obey them :  
Happy shall the nations be when they shall form one family,  
When all shall unite to help and to raise the weak and the  
unfortunate.
6. Let us act with truth and courage in every event of life :  
Let us seek all that is beautiful,  
And shun all that is base :

Let us work cheerfully, and suffer patiently,  
Let us be thankful when God sends happiness,  
And humble when He gives prosperity.

7. So shall we love God while we live,  
And do His will, and triumph over sin and sorrow,  
And share in the joy of heaven,  
And be numbered with the saints,  
And die in the hope of a higher life.

Amen !

*National Anthem.*

By W. E. Hickson, from "Hymns of Life," by H. W. Smith.

1. God bless our native land !  
May heaven's protecting hand  
Still guard our shore !  
May peace her power extend,  
Foe be transformed to friend,  
And Britain's power depend  
On war no more !
2. May just and prudent laws  
Uphold the public cause,  
And bless our isle !  
Home of the brave and free,  
The land of liberty,  
We pray that still on thee  
Kind heaven may smile !
3. And not this land alone ;  
But be Thy mercies known  
From shore to shore !  
Let all the nations see

That men should brothers be,  
And form one family  
The wide earth o'er.

*Pater Noster.*

By G. C.

1. When Sinai's thunders o'er us roll,  
And dark forebodings rack the soul,  
How sweet a Father's voice to hear,  
Whispering peace, dispelling fear.
2. When grieved to find besetting sin,  
And foul corruption lodged within,  
How sweet a Father's words of peace :  
"Thou shalt not fall, be strong in grace."
3. When dark and cheerless is our path,  
Blighted our hopes, and weak our faith ;  
How sweet to have a Father nigh,  
Who sees our tears and notes our sigh.
4. When worn by cares, by toil oppressed,  
The weary spirit longs for rest ;  
How sweet our Father's voice divine :  
" Rejoice in Me, thy griefs are mine."
5. And when life's conflicts all are o'er,  
And sin and cares distress no more ;  
How sweet will sound our Father's voice :  
" Thy work is done, come up : rejoice ! "

## 70.—DEUS.

“DIEU est au monde spirituel, et au monde physique ce que l’homme est à son esprit et à son corps.

“L’univers se compose de deux hémisphères, le monde spirituel, et le monde physique ; comme l’homme est formé par l’union d’un esprit et d’un corps.

“La nature embrasse tous les corps, la raison tous les esprits ou toutes les âmes.

“Notre propre corps et notre propre esprit font partie de la nature universelle et de la raison universelle.

“Et de même que notre esprit et notre corps sont les expressions diverses mais équivalentes de notre ‘moi,’ qui est un ; de même la raison et la nature sont les manifestations particulières, mais égales, d’une seule et même essence, de l’essence Divine ” (Krause and Tiberghien).

“Dieu est la vie éternelle et universelle, dans l’infini du temps, et dans l’infini de l’espace, dans tous les siècles comme dans chaque instant, dans tous les mondes comme dans chaque atome.

“Dieu est tout ce qui est : donc nul autre que Lui n’est Dieu : Il n’a pas de rival. Il n’y a de Dieu que Dieu : il n’y a qu’un Dieu.

“Tout est en Dieu : donc rien n’est hors de Dieu. Donc pour tout être, l’enfer, le purgatoire, le paradis, c’est la vie mauvaise, progressive, bonne : c’est le développement de la destinée de chaque être dans l’être éternel et universel : c’est la triple phase de peine, d’éducation, et de récompense que parcourt tout existence, à travers les siècles et les mondes, dans le sein de Dieu.

“Dieu est la vie éternelle et universelle : donc toute existence est une manifestation de la Sienné, et ne sort pas plus du néant par la naissance qu’elle n’y retourne par la mort, car elle participe

de l'éternité et de l'universalité qui est Dieu " (Enfantin, " La Vie E'ternelle ").

" Supposer que le monde est vide de Dieu, et que Dieu est séparé du monde, c'est une abstraction insupportable et presque impossible " (Victor Cousin).

God, the Great Father, kindled at one flame  
 The world of rationals, one spirit poured  
 From spirit's awful fountain : poured Himself  
 Through all their souls, but not in equal stream,  
 Profuse or frugal of the inspiring God,  
 As His wise plan demanded. And when passed  
 Their various trials in their various spheres,  
 If they continue rational as made,  
 Recalls them all before Himself again :  
 His throne their centre, and His smile their crown.  
 (*Young*.—The last line but one is altered).

" All are but parts of one tremendous Whole,  
 Whose Body Nature is, and God the Soul."

God is either all or nothing : *ē ouden ē pan*.  
 And conversely : *Quidquid non Deus est nihil est*.

" *Supra cuncta, subter cuncta,  
 Extra cuncta, intra cuncta :  
 Intra cuncta, nec inclusus,  
 Extra cuncta, nec exclusus :  
 Supra cuncta, nec elatus,  
 Subter cuncta, nec substratus,  
 Supra totus providendo,  
 Suber totus sustinendo :  
 Extra totus amplectendo,  
 Intra totus est implendo.*"

By Hildebert of Lavardin, Bishop of Mans, afterwards Bishop of Tours.

*Invocation to the God of Light and Truth* (from Numbers vi. 24).

The Lord bless us and keep us :

The Lord make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us :

The Lord lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace !

AMEN.

THE END.

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